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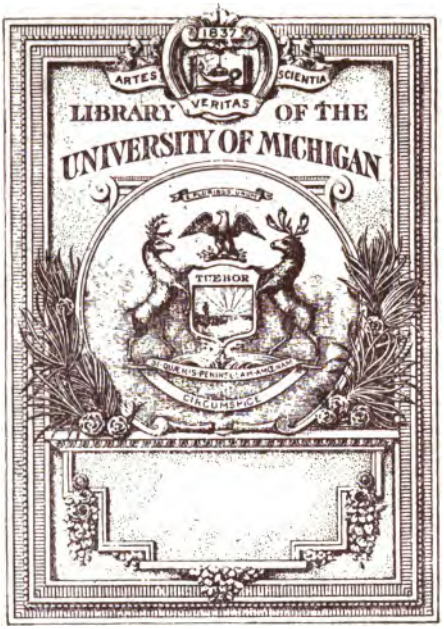
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ASK AND RECEIVE

ASK AND RECEIVE

BY

AARON MARTIN CRANE

AUTHOR OF "RIGHT AND WRONG THINKING AND THEIR RESULTS" AND "A SEARCH AFTER ULTIMATE TRUTH"

BOSTON

LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO.

Published, November, 1920

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ASK AND RECEIVE

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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

So many are the inquiries from those who have been impressed with the books of Mr. Crane and wish to know more of the man who could write so effectively that a personal statement may not be amiss.

Aaron Martin Crane was born in Glover, Orleans Co., Vermont, February 13, 1839. The foundation of his education was laid in the public schools, a local academy, and at Newbury Seminary, but the extent to which it was carried was solely due to lifelong study of carefully chosen books. Nothing seemed beyond his mental grasp.

As a volunteer private, he joined the 1st Vermont Cavalry, Co. I, August 11, 1862, and won rapid promotion for gallant and intelligent service. He was mustered out in May, 1865, with the rank of captain.

He edited and published a paper in Winchester, Va., from 1865 until 1869, and entered Government

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service in the Internal Revenue Department. Here he was an assessor until that office was abolished in 1873. After this he continued as special agent in charge at St. Louis, Cincinnati, Chicago, San Francisco, and other cities until 1884.

This was far in advance of the time when efficiency experts were a recognized feature of great establishments, but so compelling was Mr. Crane's keen, thorough analysis, and so manifest his power of organization that he was repeatedly offered large fees and salaries to systematize work in which heavy investments were at stake. He persisted, however, in turning from the world of affairs to what he felt was the work to which he was called, that of a metaphysician. His noble mien and commanding stature aided his mental and spiritual gifts and warmth of heart to make his influence impressive. He taught, wrote, and healed, in the fullest sense of the word, all the rest of his life, which ended October 22, 1914.

His marriage, January 16, 1867, to Lida D. Flint, of Irasburg, Vermont, was an ideal union. Mrs. Crane's wide culture and constant partnership in

all the activities of her husband enabled him constantly to be at his best, and her loss, after a long companionship, was the supreme test of his life.

Mr. Crane died rich in friends, and the gratitude of the host of former sufferers would have made him opulent had he allowed it, but service was ever more to him than income. No gift of his was ever withheld because any one seeking either truth or health was unable to pay for instruction.

The constantly increasing recognition given to his works, "Right and Wrong Thinking and Their Results" and "A Search after Ultimate Truth," the former being known wherever the English language is read, makes it imperative that his unpublished writings be now given to the world. "Ask and Receive" is first of all a thoughtful study of the teaching of Jesus on the universal human need of prayer. In simple, forceful words, and with reasoning so clear that it is a pleasure to follow it, the author develops the sure possibilities of prayer and its necessary attendant, faith, including the vital subject of healing. This work gives the ripest conclusions of a great and honest scholar who by his life and teaching holds in the memory of the many who have known him, whether per-

sonally or through his books, a place second to no other master of thought, save only the Great Leader whose message he so well makes plain to us.

— WARREN FENNO GREGORY.

PREFACE

I HAVE a request to make of each one who for any cause may read the following pages. It is a simple request yet important, and unless complied with, the reader will, I fear, entirely, or at best very largely, miss the meaning of what I have tried to say. The request is that he will, as far as may be, dispossess himself of all preconceived ideas or conclusions and take what is here said for what it is worth without reference to the utterances or opinions of any others except our Master and Teacher, Jesus the Christ. This much I ask for the reader's sake and for the sake of the single thought in these pages.

AARON MARTIN CRANE.

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PRAYER

JESUS' OWN WORDS

Directions Regarding Prayer

And when thou prayest,
Thou shalt not be like the hypocrites;
For they love
In the synagogues
And in the corners of the wide places
Standing
To pray,
That they may appear to the men.
Indeed, I say to you,
That they have in full the reward of them.

But thou,
When thou prayest,
Enter into the retired place of thee,
And locking the door of thee,
Pray thou
To the Father of thee,
To the (Father) in the secret;

And the Father of thee
Who (is) seeing in the secret place,
Will give to thee in the clear light.
But praying,
Babble not
Like the Gentiles;
For they imagine
That in the wordiness of them
They shall be heard.
Not, therefore,
You may be like to them;
For the Father of you knows
Of what things you have need,
Before you ask of Him.[1]

Asking

Ask, and it shall be given you;
Seek, and ye shall find;
Knock, and it shall be opened unto you;
For
Every one that asketh receiveth;

[1] This is an adaptation of Benjamin Wilson's literal, or word-for-word, translation of Matthew VI. 5–8 Vatican manuscript. The order of the words is changed in a few places to make it accord with English forms of expression, the two words in parenthesis are added and it is broken up into lines to accord with the divisions of thought; but there are no other changes.

And he that seeketh findeth;
And to him that knocketh it shall be opened.[1]

The Great Rule for all Prayer

Jesus, answering, saith unto them:
Have faith of God.
Verily, I say unto you:
Whosoever shall say unto this mountain,
Be thou taken up and cast into the sea;
And shall not doubt in his heart,
But shall believe
That what he saith cometh to pass;
He shall have it.

Therefore, I say unto you:
All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for,
Believe that ye have received them,
And ye shall have them.

And whensoever ye stand praying,
Forgive,
If ye have aught against any one;
That your Father also which is in heaven
May forgive you your trespasses.[2]

[1] Matt. VII. 7, 8.

[2] Mark XI. 22–25. The only variation from the Revised Version is in the second line, and that is a marginal reading in the King James Version.

ASK AND RECEIVE

I

INTRODUCTION

CHRISTIANS recognize Jesus the Christ as their great leader and teacher in all moral and spiritual affairs. Many things were done by him which people of his time called wonderful works, and which later were known as miracles. He healed the sick, raised the dead, and controlled the elements.

It was generally believed that his works were wrought solely through the power of God, which Jesus manifested in the setting aside or suspension of natural laws. For centuries this belief was accepted by many, not only as a sufficient explanation of his works, but as the seal of his divine origin and character.

The deeds accomplished by Jesus were out of the usual course of events, and many men,

learned in the science of the material world, have said that these so-called miracles were contrary to the invariable laws of nature and therefore could not have occurred; yet they have acknowledged that there is a vast domain of nature of which they are totally ignorant. Is it not, then, possible that with reference to these "miracles," they have spoken dogmatically about that of which they had insufficient knowledge?

Scientific knowledge has increased in these later days, and many wonderful results have been attained in exact compliance with laws hitherto unknown. The idea has developed that possibly, if not probably, Jesus performed his works in absolute harmony with the inflexible laws of nature, laws which men do not even now fully recognize, but which they will some time perceive and understand. This means that everything Jesus did was in strict accordance with natural laws, and that thus his acts were not miracles in the earlier understanding of that word. With this interpretation there

is no occasion to question the story of these events. Thus a reasonable basis is given for expecting that finally, when mankind arrives at an understanding of these great laws, the things which Jesus said and did will be fully explained to the entire comprehension of every one. It also makes reasonable and intelligible the statement that Jesus made with much earnestness under circumstances of unusual solemnity: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father."[1]

An unbroken tradition extending from that day to this testifies that the events narrated in the Gospels did actually occur, and this is supported by written narratives which date back almost to the origin of the tradition. Considerable portions of these narratives were written by persons who were eye-witnesses of the events, or who derived their knowledge from others who themselves were eye-witnesses.

[1] John XIV. 12. Revised Version.

In any case a large amount of peculiar and individualistic moral teaching relating to human conduct has come down to us. This teaching is of extreme importance and was unquestionably derived from Jesus the Christ. No other events in the history of his times are better authenticated than is this teaching, and after all necessary and rightful allowances are made for possible mistakes and exaggerations, there is left a very extensive and substantial amount of truth regarding Jesus and his teachings.

Jesus presents to us his instructions regarding all moral living in words so plain that they cannot be misunderstood. An important portion of these instructions is included in what he said about two closely related subjects, prayer and faith.

Prayer is the natural attitude of man toward that infinite, all-powerful, all-wise, and everywhere ever-present Being, the Creator of the universe, by whatever name He may be designated and whatever may be any man's conception of Him. Prayer is a universal instinct,

a desire — even a need — of the race; and, so far as history, tradition, or even inference gives us any definite clew, it appears that prayer has been more or less believed in and practised by the entire family of mankind. Just as there has never been found a nation or a group of people of any development whatever, who had not some idea of God, so there has never been found any who did not have some idea of prayer. Prayer seems to be inherent in the human race; it seems to be something belonging to the race, which we see must exist wherever there is a recognition of a supreme being capable of bestowing gifts and protecting care, so that necessarily the idea of praying is as wide as the idea of God.

The consciousness of some need is generally the beginning of prayer and its usual accompaniment. With this is the belief to a greater or lesser degree that the one appealed to possesses the willingness and the ability to grant what is asked. But there is a higher form of prayer which is purely an expression of grati-

tude for benefits already conferred. Communion with God is prayer in its very highest form. In such prayer we do not beseech or ask, we *know* the truth, — that all things are indeed ours, — and the more of such communion that we have with God, the more do we understand our relationship to Him.

The entire subject of prayer in all its phases is of peculiar importance because not only is prayer of the widest use and application, but, whatever its form or object, it touches the secret, fundamental, sacred, and most important conditions of life. For these reasons what Jesus said about prayer is of the most intense interest and of the greatest value.

Evidently Jesus did not intend to remove prayer beyond the domain of human affairs nor to surround it with mystery, and it is especially noteworthy that he never connects prayer with ceremony or formality of any kind. In speaking of prayer, he uses his customary simple style of language, and with the dignity and earnestness characteristic of his utterances,

his words are always positive, clear, and unmistakable. Not a doubt is expressed as to the certainty that prayer will be answered. His words on this subject are few, simple, and direct, but they are wonderfully comprehensive and complete.

All that Jesus said or did relative to prayer is included in the following: First, full instructions how to pray, concluding with the positive and unequivocal declaration that the request of the one complying with his instructions will be granted.[1] Second, an unconditional, threefold statement that the desire of every one that asketh, seeketh, or knocketh shall be satisfied.[2] Third, a definite, specific, and universal requirement for all prayer, concluding with the positive assurance that he who fulfills this requirement shall receive his request.[3] Fourth, his own prayer, and his own attitude in prayer

[1] Matt. VI. 5–15.

[2] Matt. VII. 7, 8; context 9–12; and Luke XI. 9, 10; context 5–8, 11–13.

[3] Matt. XXI. 21, 22; context 18–20; and Mark XI. 22–25; context 12–14, 20–22.

as shown in his complete surrender of purely material desires and his then perfect realization of the oneness with the Father and of the truth in his own statement made to his disciples, "For your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him."

We see in his own prayer, at the final and extreme crisis when he asked his Father for relief from the supreme agony of his earthly career, that even in the midst of his plea came a revulsion of thought, and in entire self-surrender and in renunciation of his own request he cried out, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt"; and though he passed through the shame and the agony, there followed the supreme joy and the glory of complete and perfect success.[1]

[1] Matt. XXVI. 39–42; context 36–38, 43–46. Mark XIV. 35–39; context 32–34, 40–42. Luke XXII. 41–46; context 39–41.

II

HOW TO PRAY

OUR Lord's Prayer, which Jesus the Christ made for the use of every human being, is the most wonderful group of petitions known to man, for in its broad general terms it includes all that any one can ask for; besides it is the most widely known, and most frequently repeated of any of his utterances. It is noticeable that in immediate connection with this prayer not one word occurs about the advisability, duty, or necessity for praying; and, indeed, it is only in comparatively few cases, and these exceptional ones, that Jesus commands any one to pray. He so clearly understands mankind that he assumes that all will wish to pray, and acting on that assumption he gives us his clear and explicit instructions regarding prayer, and then leaves each one free to pray or not as one chooses. Yet he

knows that all will pray, for to desire intensely or to ask earnestly for what one wishes is, after all, prayer whether or not one calls the action praying.

Jesus' introduction to this prayer is hardly less important than the prayer itself,[1] for in it he sets forth the conditions and methods that should be avoided, as well as those that should accompany all prayer. It is not directly stated to whom these preliminary words are addressed, but, as in many another of his most earnest and important utterances, they are for "him who hears" and they thus clearly include all who hear and understand; they are for each one who is about to pray.

At the very beginning he unqualifiedly prohibits all praying which is merely for the sake of publicity or pretense, and he lashes with the most scornful irony those who do "such things." He says, "Thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the

[1] Matt. VI. 5–8.

streets, that they may be seen of men." This is the same position that he took in regard to almsgiving, and the same conclusion: "Verily I say unto you, They have their reward." Such praying was mere ostentation, a characteristic utterly foreign to his own nature and to his methods of teaching.

As he continues, he gives positive advice for privacy in all praying; and in this he follows the natural inclination of the human mind. Public praying rarely occurs except when two or more persons are moved by a common impulse or emotion, which in some cases may be no more than an earnest desire to influence listeners. We can easily understand the reasons that prompt to privacy in nearly all earnest praying, whether it arises from instinct, education, veneration, a natural shrinking from an exposure of secret desires or feelings, or from a combination of all these. Often Jesus went alone into the desert or into the wilderness to pray, showing that at such times he loved to be alone with God. His public prayers

were few. The spirit of every man can best attune itself to a consciousness of the Father's presence when he puts himself beyond all chance of interruption.

The central portion of this introduction to "Our Lord's Prayer" contains the most important, and the essential directions for all praying stated in a divinely impressive manner; and it is here that Jesus sets forth in clear, personal, and broadly expressive terms the necessary mental conditions that each individual must create for himself when about to pray, and when praying. "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Notice the earnestness and the directness of the language which he uses. He speaks as if he had in mind only the one person who is about to pray. The intense personal appeal to that individual is remarkable. Among all the things that Jesus said, in not one is the language

more directly and intensely personal than in this. Even in beginning he says with striking emphasis, "*But thou.*" It is so direct that he seems almost to call out to each of his hearers individually by his own name, and to say to him alone in the midst of them all, "But *thou*, when *thou* prayest."

Though Jesus thus addresses this expression especially to each one within the sound of his voice, as though that one, and he alone, were the only person in all the world who would ever pray, yet in his language he makes no exceptions, and for that very reason, in exactly the same directly personal way, his words include all mankind. In the intensity of his thought his words search out and go directly to each individual and to that one in particular, therefore to all. Not one in the whole world is left out; and thus he says to all, "But *thou*, when *thou* prayest, enter into thy closet."

The word here rendered "closet" had, in the usage of the Greeks, and therefore as understood by all who used their language, a

meaning entirely distinct from that of our English word "closet," for to them it conveyed a definite idea of secrecy.[1] With entire fidelity to the original language the expression might be translated, "Enter into the secret place of thee"; "enter into thine own spiritual being"; and what more retired or secret place exists than one's own individual spirit, the innermost of one's own being? The Jews and the Samaritans, as well as many others before and since, disputed over places for prayer and worship.

[1] The word is worthy of particular consideration in order that we may arrive at a correct understanding of what it meant to the hearers at the time when Jesus was speaking. In this sentence which we are considering, Matt. VI. 6, and in XXIV. 26, as well as in Luke XII. 3, it is rendered "inner chamber" in both the English and American Revisions. Rev. Alfred Plummer, D.D., in his "Critical and Exegetical Commentary," page 318, says of this Greek word, " 'Storehouses' are commonly '*inner* chambers, secret rooms,' especially in the East, where outer walls are so easily dug through." Thayer defines the word, "a chamber, especially an inner chamber; a secret room." Prof. W. F. Slater, M.A., adds the explanatory clause, "The storeroom, especially where a man's treasures were kept and his private affairs were transacted." Wilson, in his "Emphatic Diaglott," aiming at exact literalness, renders the phrase, "enter into the retired place of thee"; where it occurs in Matt. VI. 6, and also in Matt. XXIV. 26, he renders it, "Behold, he is in the secret apartments."

Jesus destroyed the foundation for all such disputes when he said to the woman at the well, "Neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, shall men worship"; not in any *specified place*, but "in spirit and in truth." The poet would say, "Enter into the heart of thine own heart"; the preacher would say, "Enter into thine own soul"; but Jesus suggested a deeper and more solemn meaning than either when he said to this Samaritan woman, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth." "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth."[1] If we ought to worship in spirit, then, for the same reason, we ought to pray in spirit. Thus we see that, according to Jesus' teaching, the place for worship and for prayer is not in any special location, but is "in spirit." *Thou* art spirit. Every "thou" is spirit, and *everywhere* is place for worship and prayer, wherever *thou* art.

There is no more secret place for any one

[1] John IV. 21–24.

than within one's own spirit, — within one's own real self, — for no one can be admitted to those sacred precincts except by permission of the man himself; and there in the innermost recesses of his being he comes into closest communion with his Father, for not only is God spirit, but we His children are each a product of that great First Cause and therefore we are of the same substance with Him; we are of *His* substance, and we are of *His* spirit.

Men everywhere are seeking for a sacred place in which to pray, just as they did in Jesus' time, but one does not need to "seek," nor to "go," nor to "come," nor even to "enter into" this "inner sanctuary" of one's own spirit. A man has only to become consciously aware that he is indeed a child of his Father,[1] the infinite and eternal God, himself created in the image and after the likeness of that Father, and therefore he, in his own individual spiritual self is more sacred and holy, than was ever declared of the "holy of holies" at Jerusalem.

[1] *A Search after Ultimate Truth*, Section 203.

Paul recognized this when he said, "Ye are the temple of the living God."[1] Thus within one's self is one's own "inner chamber," at all times ready for occupancy and use, the most appropriate place in all the universe for prayer. With this understanding, the words of Jesus convey a deeper meaning to us: "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into the retired place of thee." Wherever you may happen to be; in church on a Sunday morning, in the street with its tumult and confusion, in the rush and crush of the crowd, or in the lone woods — there, wherever thou art, *within thyself*, is the holy temple not made by hands; for within thee is the divine spirit; within thee is the kingdom of God.[2] What are palaces, temples,

[1] 1 Cor. III. 16, 17; and 2 Cor. VI. 16. In these places in the King James Version the Greek word "*naos*," always meaning a holy or sacred place, is rendered "temple," but in the marginal notes of the Revised Version it is translated "sanctuary," and this word is always used in the New Testament to designate the holy of holies of the temple at Jerusalem. In classical Greek the word is similarly used to designate the cell or room in the Grecian temple where the images of their gods were kept.

[2] Luke XVII. 21.

cathedrals, churches, and all places built by men when compared with this!

Continuing the use of the same metaphor of the closet or secret place according to the language of the King James Version, Jesus intensifies his thought of the privacy of this place, when he says, "and when thou hast shut thy door." The Greek word rendered "shut" has various meanings, including to bar, or to lock. With entire faithfulness to the meaning of the Greek words the whole clause might read, "Enter into the secret place of thee, and when thou hast locked thy door." The idea of self-seclusion and of the complete exclusion of all external affairs is far more intensive than that of merely shutting the door, and this meaning is clearly suggested by the general context as well as by the meaning of the more immediate Greek words.

God is infinite, and because He is infinite He is literally and actually present everywhere, and therefore can never be excluded from any place, not even from the most secret of all

secret places, and He is the one contributing cause of the sacredness of all sacred places; indeed His presence makes all places peculiarly sacred. This exclusion from one's own being of everything except God and His righteousness stands out prominently in the teaching of Jesus.

Two appropriate examples of this dominant peculiarity of his teachings appear in what he says in the "Sermon on the Mount" about anger,[1] and about adultery.[2] He would have every man banish all anger from himself so completely that there would not remain for him the slightest consciousness of its existence either in himself or in others. The topic in the Sermon immediately following this one of anger is adultery. His position on this subject is stated in terms so plain that the most superficial and careless reader can understand that Jesus proposes such complete exclusion of every impure thought from the mind, that in the ordinary succession of human events, the

[1] Matt. V. 21–24. [2] Matt. V. 27–30.

result of such exclusion would be to cause even the name of adultery and of all kindred crimes to disappear totally from the earth.[1]

When his teaching along these and all similar lines is carefully studied, men will find that not only are these two sins of anger and lust totally to be excluded from the mind, — and this means even to the least and smallest thought, — but in every instance of erroneous thinking or acting, his method is the same; therefore when he thus counsels us to go into the secret place of ourselves alone with God, shutting the door of our minds on all discordant thoughts, he is but emphasizing a principle which lies at the root of all of his ethical teachings and which he would have us faithfully observe.

Thus this careful exclusion of every erroneous thought from the mind appears to be the only natural and efficacious mental and spiritual preparation by which a man becomes rightly

[1] *Right and Wrong Thinking and Their Results*, Chapter XLIV; also, *A Search after Ultimate Truth*, Section 378.

and properly prepared to pray. If no man ever prayed except at the conclusion of such preparation as this, or if every man kept himself thus prepared for prayer in accordance with these instructions, a large proportion of the prayers which are now offered would never reach the lips or even the mind, and the character of those which are offered would be vastly different. Having fulfilled these instructions, the man is ready to listen to the next words of Jesus as he tells him in peculiarly sweet and solemn tones which are in entire harmony with his own mental condition, "Pray thou." Let us at this point review the directions which Jesus has thus far given and which are so simple, so important, and yet so comprehensive:

But thou,
When thou prayest,
Enter into thy secret chamber,
And when thou hast locked thy door,
Pray thou
To the Father of thee,
To the (Father) in the secret;

And the Father of thee
Who (is) seeing in the secret place,
Will give to thee in the clear light.[1]

"To whom shall the petition be addressed?" He who has reached the condition suggested by the preceding requirements of Jesus does not have to wait for his answer to this question. There is only one answer and there is only one being who can meet the requirements of the occasion and satisfy the petitioner. No sooner does this question present itself than is heard the unequivocal response of Jesus: "Pray thou, to the Father of thee." In that secret sanctuary of yourself, which Paul designated as "the temple of the living God," you are to present your petition to your Father. This is communion of the highest order, — words are not needed.

This condition provides for the most perfect seclusion and also for the most perfect freedom.

[1] Though the rendition here given varies from either of the accepted versions, yet the form of the Greek text is substantially preserved with no change of its meaning.

Although it is impossible for you to have any secrets from your heavenly Father, — for in His omniscience He knoweth all things from the very beginning to the farthest end, and your life is read by Him as from an open book, — yet He wishes your every thought and action to be as entirely free as you were created "in the beginning," so that you may act without the slightest influence either by suggestion, persuasion, or compulsion, even from the Father Himself.[1]

Jesus not only says that this request is to be made "to the Father of thee," but earnestly desiring that we should recognize His readiness to give to us, he in the next chapter draws a comparison between the willingness of the earthly parent to give good gifts to his son, and the even greater willingness of our heavenly Father to give unto His children. Jesus intensifies both thoughts, — that of the Father or divine Fatherhood and of the required or essential seclusion — when he says in his next

[1] *A Search after Ultimate Truth*, Chapter XLIV, "Freedom."

words, "to the Father in the secret." That Father to whom the request is to be presented is more willing to give than any earthly parent can be, because, as Jesus himself says to Him in his last prayer, "Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved me."[1] Jesus wishes that he who is to pray should not for a moment lose sight, either of the necessity for secrecy or of the fact of the Father's love, for he prepares to end this central portion of his introduction by a third and last assertion that He is thy Father; "And the Father of thee who (is) seeing in the secret place"; and he ends with this positive and divinely gracious affirmation, "*Will give to thee* in the clear light." There is not the slightest note of uncertainty about that. It is positive, clear, precise. It only remains for him who is asking to do his part. God will do His. He answers prayer, He will answer yours.

Jesus began these instructions regarding prayer with an admonition against hypocrisy

[1] John XVII. 23.

and pretense, and now he closes them with equally positive warnings against "vain repetition" and "long prayers." Our Lord's Prayer is a sample of extreme brevity. It is not the length of the prayer that makes it successful, but the *belief* of him who prays, his certainty that the words of our Master are correct and that the prayer will be answered. It is not a question of long prayers or of repetition of many words. These are not necessary. Ah, was there any repetition in any of his prayers that we have an account of? Was there repetition at the tomb of Lazarus; or in the Garden; or on the cross? And we, we too who pray, who have had our prayers answered, know that it is not in the repetition, it is not in the long prayers that the essence of prayer consists, but it is in some one word of faith, some believing thought, some quick contact of spirit with spirit.

The words of Jesus at this place are, "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be

heard for their much speaking." This is not inconsistent with his teaching elsewhere on the need of persistence in prayer. In the parable of the friend at midnight,[1] and of the unjust judge,[2] Jesus teaches "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." We should "pray without ceasing." The heathen, however, think that form and ceremony are all-important in prayer, as if it were some kind of magic incantation; but Jesus says, "Be not ye like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him." This assertion might seem startling if we heard it now for the first time, but we perceive its truth if we stop for a moment to consider the fact that God is omniscient, knowing all things, even from the first to the last, as omniscience must.

The questioner may ask at this point, "What then is the need, or even the possible use, of any praying? Can man tell God anything?" But Jesus prayed often. The student of the

[1] Luke XI. 5–8. [2] Luke XVIII. 1–8.

Gospels as he advances in knowledge becomes more and more convinced that there was a decided advantage to Jesus in praying, and if to him, how much more must there be an advantage to us? At least in this intercommunion between himself and God, there was to Jesus a continual strengthening of his consciousness of the love of his Father for him, and a continual increase of his knowledge of all those things which he has told us regarding the Father's love for all His children.

There is the greatest possible advantage to us in going to Him, in the way that Jesus has so distinctly directed, confidently relying on Him as on a loving Father, also relying on His entire willingness, and ability, and even His gladness, far above that of an earthly parent, to grant the requests of His children. The establishment of that mental attitude of confident reliance and trust in Him, coupled as it must necessarily be with the knowledge of His infinite love, would make new and vastly better beings of us all and would give us a new

and better opinion of this world in which we live. This is the last word of Jesus to us about how to pray, before he enters upon that most wonderful of all expressions of his in which he tells us what to ask for, and which we call "Our Lord's Prayer."

III

THE PRAYERS OF JESUS

WHAT constitutes prayer? The more general definition of prayer is asking, desiring, seeking. As the poet said, "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire." We recognize that words are not necessary to prayer, but true prayer is always earnest, always sincere, always the heart's expression, even in the asking, though prayer is not limited to asking.

Prayer may be divided into three divisions: the asking, the thankfulness for having received, and communion. As we pray, as we receive, naturally there comes the thankfulness for having received, thankfulness for the answer to our prayer. This, I believe, is one of the important divisions of prayer.

Yet, the greater, the broader thought of prayer is communion, communion with the Infinite God, that Being whom Jesus taught

us to call Father. In this communion, the spirit, seeking nothing but communion, nothing but recognition, realizes the relationship between itself and God. I think this is the highest, the purest, the divinest form of prayer, — communion, realization, recognition.

We may compare this, on the human plane, to our social relations with friends. We delight in asking our friends a favor if the friendship is close enough, the understanding of each other great enough. We do not look upon it as a task, but as a pleasure, because we know that if our friend should ask a favor of us, we ourselves should be as glad to give as he would be to receive. But beyond the asking of the favor is the delight of thankfulness, the delight that comes from receiving, the delight that comes from having been granted the favor. Then, beyond and above all this, is the communion of spirit which all true friendship enjoys; and the more intimate the relationship, the closer becomes this communion of each with each, heart with heart, spirit with spirit.

So in a similar way is this threefold relationship with God: the asking, the thankfulness, the communion; only here, how infinitely greater and how infinitely beyond words to portray! God, our Father, is the origin and source of our existence and the spiritual life which has been given to us from Him is out of His own life. Thus prayer — communion with Him — becomes the highest, sincerest, intensest delight.

Jesus prayed. He prayed often, though but few of his prayers have been reported, and these, with one single exception, are very brief. Generally we are told of his going apart by himself, alone, to pray. He seemed to want to get away from human influence and association into the wilderness where he could be entirely alone. I do not think this was simply for the sake of not being interrupted. I think we may each of us find in ourselves the reason why he wanted to be alone with the Father, and can understand why, under trying circumstances and when there were difficulties and

dangers surrounding him, he went apart to pray.

If ever a man lived in all the history of the world who prayed, it was Jesus the Christ, and I doubt if any one has ever prayed more than he did. Moreover his understanding was such that his prayers must have been superior to all other prayers. He lived closer to God than any other human being and he prayed under peculiar circumstances.

One of his earliest prayers was the night after the instances of healing at Capernaum. We love to think of this because it seems to have so much of meaning in it and to throw such an insight into his real character. The Gospel of Luke tells us how he came to Simon Peter's house, where Simon's wife's mother was sick with a fever, and he healed her. She immediately arose and ministered unto them.[1] It was on the Sabbath day, and as soon as their Sabbath was ended, which was at set of sun, the people of the city brought to him all their

[1] Luke IV. 38, 39.

sick, and he healed them. All went away having received that for which they came.

This was at the beginning of his ministry; it was really the beginning of his career. Looking at this from our purely human standpoint, we should naturally say that it was for him a most glorious occasion and one of great success. Yet we are told that "In the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." [1] Praying after such success as that must have a meaning, must have a significance! The imagination falters when it tries to picture that scene in the silence and darkness of the night, with the gradual dawning and coming of the day, — Jesus there alone by himself at prayer.

Then there was another time when the multitude had come to him to be healed, and they were without food. Amongst them all were but five loaves and two fishes. Jesus directed the people to sit down on the grass in com-

[1] Mark I. 35.

panies of fifty and one hundred, about five thousand in all. Then taking the food he blessed it and gave thanks, and all were fed; and that nothing be lost they gathered up the fragments, and there were twelve baskets full.[1]

This attracted the attention of the Jews. To them it was supremely wonderful, and, as the record of John says, they wanted to make Jesus king. What did he come for but to be a king? Was not he the Jew's Messiah, and was not the Messiah to be a temporal sovereign? But what did he do? Why, he persuaded his disciples to get into a boat and to go to the other side of the lake. Then, after sending away the people, he himself went on the mountain alone to pray. Jesus continually prayed. He prayed before his wonderful works, and he prayed afterwards.

One of the most sublime of all his prayers was that prayer at the tomb of Lazarus, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard

[1] Mark VI. 34–44; John VI. 5–13.

me."[1] When we can pray that prayer, when we from the heart can repeat for ourselves those words as he uttered them there, the dead will rise in our day, as they did in his. "Father, I thank Thee that Thou *hast* heard me." The great thought expressed in these words should be the one toward which we aspire for realization in every prayer. When we can even approximately recognize this, and can believe that the Father does hear us, and that He knows the thought that is in our hearts, then we shall stand closer to Him and shall enter into a closer communion with Him than we have ever done before.

There was that wonderful prayer after the Last Supper, the one which is recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John. At the close of this Gospel John emphasizes the great number of Jesus' deeds which have not been put in writing.[2] In like manner we may say of this single prayer, that if all the thoughts suggested by it were written, the books of the

[1] John XI. 41. [2] John XXI. 25.

world would not contain them. There is nothing else in all literature or in the history of prayer that is like it; nothing that can compare with it for suggestiveness, recognition, and realization, for knowledge and understanding and wisdom.

And then there was the prayer in Gethsemane. He stood face to face with what we look upon as the concluding tragedy of life. Painful and long continued suffering, disgrace and death were before him. His disciples seemed powerless before the force that overwhelmed them. It is no wonder, looking at it from our human point of view, that Jesus prayed the Father that this cup might pass from him, yet immediately he changed his thought, uttering these wonderful words, "Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." [1]

"Nevertheless" was the turning point from the human to the divine, from the materialistic to the spiritual, from the thought of shame and disgrace and failure to that of glory and

[1] Matt. XXVI. 39.

success. What a marvelous lesson to mankind is in this prayer! Nevertheless not *my* will, not the will of *me* as a human being, but the will of God, the will of the Eternal Right, *be done.* Oh, that the world would recognize the beauty and magnificent grandeur of it all! His sleeping disciples apart from him, he stood there alone in the garden, possessing the power to overthrow the force of the Roman Empire with a word. He had no more need to be crucified than Pilate or Cæsar. He had but to say the word at the time of his arrest and all that followed would have been avoided. The human will is the will that fights, that resists, but that is not the will of God according to the teaching of Jesus. His teaching was "Resist not evil," but "Love your enemies," and he says to the world, the whole world, as he said to his disciples in that little upper room, "Love one another as I have loved you," and "I have loved you as the Father hath loved me."[1] Love was the keynote of his teaching throughout all

[1] John XV. 9, 12.

those wonderful three years, and he recognized love as the keynote of the Father's will; that will of absolute right, in which there is neither shadow nor turning. I have no doubt in my own mind but that the temptation was upon him as it was in the wilderness after his baptism, as it had been a number of times before; but he put it all away, he put it all behind him, and said, *Thy will*, — the will of absolute right, the will of absolute non-resistance, the will of love that loves enemies, — *Thy will be done.*

Then that last prayer, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."[1] Words fail us here! As in Gethsemane, he turns from the evil and abides in the truth with a courage that has never been surpassed, that will never be surpassed. Wonderful prayers! He who could utter such prayers, who could forgive with such complete forgiveness, who touched the very heights of sublimity in his deeds and words, has given us simple directions *how to pray.*

[1] Luke XXIII. 34.

IV

THE CERTAINTY OF ANSWER TO PRAYER

AS TOLD BY MATTHEW AND LUKE

It is one of the peculiarities of Jesus that he seldom repeats his statements, yet in a single one of his utterances on the subject of asking and receiving, or of praying and the answer to prayer, he repeats his idea in closely similar phrases several times:

"Ask, and it shall be given you;
Seek, and ye shall find;
Knock, and it shall be opened unto you;
For every one that asketh receiveth;
And he that seeketh findeth;
And to him that knocketh it shall be opened." [1]

Only the importance of the statement, its interest to all human beings, and the conse-

[1] Matt. VII. 7, 8.

quent desire of Jesus to impress it upon his hearers could have led him to present it in this forceful form.

This is a part of the "Sermon on the Mount," and probably was uttered early in his career. The three verses immediately following this passage intensify the idea that Jesus wishes to convey to us, — of the positive certainty that God will answer our prayer. Appealing more closely to the hearts of his listeners and wishing to bring the teaching more within the scope of their comprehension, he gives this convincing illustration:

"What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" [1]

Jesus' words in these five verses are strongly indicative of his earnest desire that we have implicit faith that God, the Father of us all,

[1] Matt. VII. 9–11.

will in His boundless love for His children do for us those things that Jesus said He would do.

The same language occurs also in Luke,[1] except that Luke prefaces his version with the words, "And I say unto you," an expression that Jesus used often when he wished to direct particular attention to what he was about to say. Luke's version is followed by three verses which are an equivalent of those that follow this passage in the Sermon, while it is preceded by the parable of the friend at midnight, which is suggestive of the same idea. These statements of Jesus are of the most positive character, and it is noteworthy that neither in any allusion to the general subject touched upon by these utterances, nor in anything that he has said about it, is their obvious meaning contradicted in the slightest; on the contrary, if possible to do so, he has elsewhere made his meaning even more clear and emphatic.[2]

[1] Luke XI. 9, 10.

[2] It is important that such a zealous "higher critic" as Cheyne, and one of such distinguished reputation, has admitted to his *Encyclopedia Biblica* an article which strongly endorses these

These words[1] have many remarkable peculiarities, perhaps none greater than the possibility of their exact translation into any spoken or written language. Scholars understand the many and perplexing questions that sometimes arise in connection with translation, some of which are impossible to solve with entire satisfaction. A translation should be clear and idiomatic, and at the same time should accurately express the thought of the original. This is especially necessary when the utterances are of such immense importance as those of Jesus. In this instance, fortunately, the translator has little difficulty. The words of Jesus are simple, brief, and exact. Furthermore they are complete. Thus, every man, whether savage or civilized, ignorant or learned,

words as undoubtedly authentic. Especially is this valuable since, as a verbal critic, he is quite as unrelenting with regard to the New Testament as with any portion of the Old Testament. This endorsement coming from such a source is particularly acceptable because the passages contain statements of fundamental importance covering a broad range of subjects about which much discussion has arisen, and much doubt has been expressed.

[1] Matt. VII. 7, 8.

may hear in his own tongue the statements Jesus made regarding prayer and may understand them perfectly; and, what is equally important, he may *know* that he has thus accurately heard and understood them. Also every man may be convinced that Jesus made these statements. He need not fear that they are the ingenious interpretation of an obscure passage of Greek. Every one knows what it means to ask and receive, to seek and find, to knock and be admitted to his neighbor's habitation, whether that habitation be a palace or a cave. Yet these simple words include every instruction necessary for praying. Only Jesus could have stated the truth so simply and so completely.

"Ask, and it shall be given you," is the first declaration of the series. What one may ask for is entirely without limitation either here or elsewhere in Jesus' teaching. Ask for whatever you wish is the obvious meaning of the words, and there is not the slightest suggestion of a doubt but that you will receive the

object of your petition. To doubt would be directly contrary to both the letter and the spirit of the statement; indeed, one potent reason for asking is expressed in the unequivocal assertion, "and it shall be given you." Even this is reënforced a few words farther on by the emphatic avowal that "every one that asketh receiveth." Language cannot be made more positive or unmistakable. It is clearly within the meaning of these words that all one has to do, is to ask for whatever he wants and the request will be granted.

The next statement, though it is couched in exactly the same form as the preceding, presents a subject essentially different in some particulars, but in language equally positive: "Seek, and ye shall find." In the first statement there is nothing for the individual to do but to ask, earnestly of course, and with confident expectation; but here much may depend upon the petitioner's own personal and active exertions toward gaining the object of his desire; he is to seek. The basis of each

proposition exists in what are universally recognized as entirely usual and normal conditions. It is perfectly natural for one to ask for what one wants; it would be unnatural if the normal man were not himself moved to make a personal effort to obtain his desire; and the greater his desire the more diligently will he seek. This second statement contains as impelling a reason for seeking as the first does for asking, namely, — "ye shall find." One would never hesitate to seek, if he were fully confident that the seeking would result in finding; and here, in the words of Jesus, is the unqualified assurance that "he that seeketh findeth." As before, in the words relating to asking, there is not the slightest occasion for doubt.

The third and last proposition is identical in form with the others and is just as positive. Jesus says, "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you."[1] As in each of the other proposi-

[1] The Greek word here translated "knock" occurs five times in the New Testament. In each of these places it so obviously

tions, it is noticeable that here also entire confidence is expressed in the certainty of a favorable response. Thus the declaration, "and it shall be opened unto you," is a sufficient reason why one should knock, and there is not the slightest need of the repetition that follows in the next verse. But that there may be no misunderstanding or mistake because of failure of words on his part, Jesus repeats and thereby strengthens his already thrice asserted declaration by saying in conclusion, "Every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." He says this with the same incontestable positiveness with which the astronomer speaks of the fully ascertained and invariable movements of the planetary spheres.

If we present each reason why we should ask, seek, and knock, immediately after the

means "knock at a door for admittance" that even where these explanatory words are not inserted, any other meaning is not possible because of the context. Young, who is very cautious in his definitions, adds to his definition of this word the phrase, "at the door."

direction to which it clearly refers, we shall make no change in the meaning and a very slight change in the words themselves, but for some readers we may perhaps increase the emphasis of the declaration:

"Ask, and it shall be given you, for every one that asketh receiveth;
Seek, and ye shall find, for he that seeketh findeth;
Knock, and it shall be opened unto you, for to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

Whatsoever the arrangement of the clauses, the same positiveness of assertion remains. No words can be stronger or more positive than these of Jesus.

Jesus' idea of prayer as here presented includes within its broad scope every possible source from which either divine or human help can come. First, we are to ask the Father, who is infinite in power and ability and who thus includes within Himself the entirety of divine aid. This, if our faith is sufficient, is all that is necessary. But Jesus knew that

sufficient faith might not be manifested at first by all, and such are to use their own efforts in seeking. That failing, they are to knock at the door of their brother for help, which means that they are to appeal for assistance to each human being within their reach. There is every reason for confidently expecting complete success because Jesus has so positively told us that failure is impossible. Some may not recognize this great truth, but it is an unvarying principle which is working in the essential nature of things, and is as inevitable as the day following the dawn.

We must not forget that man has *his* part to do, even though it be only to ask, to seek, or to knock, and human impatience often interferes to hinder, or even to prevent, the otherwise certain result. He may be in such haste to obtain what he wishes that, impatient at what seems to him like delay, he may definitely conclude that success by any means is impossible, and in despair, born solely of his own ill-judged haste, he may abandon his asking just

at the instant when a little more perseverance would bring the desired result.[1]

This erroneous conclusion and consequent erroneous action constitute the rankest injustice on the part of the man towards the principle involved, and towards Jesus the Christ, and towards the Father. He thus deserves to fail because he alone has been the cause of his failure.

In such cases, the man, disregarding the fact that he has not fulfilled the conditions requisite for success, is generally prone to impute the failure to a failure of the principle involved, — *but principle never fails.* In his own mind he decides that "it will not work," and, consequently, that he "will try something else." This last expression is his own confession of the half-heartedness of his efforts. The principles on which the statements of Jesus

[1] It is significant that the tense used in the original Greek implies, "*Keep on* asking, *keep on* seeking, *keep on* knocking." In Matt. VII. 5, on the other hand, "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye," a different tense is used, which implies a single act. One could not keep casting out a beam.

rest will always "work" if man will only "work" them; and he certainly can.

On another occasion Jesus said to his disciples, "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, *it shall be done* for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."[1] This declaration is made in precisely the same spirit that is expressed in the sixfold statement we have been considering, and is just as positive and unmistakable in its meaning. *The request shall be granted.*

[1] Matt. XVIII. 19, 20.

V

THE CERTAINTY OF ANSWER TO PRAYER

AS TOLD BY JOHN

In the Gospel according to John is another group of Jesus' sayings relative to asking and receiving, which introduces conditions somewhat different from those that are found in Matthew and Luke. In John each statement contains a clearly specified requirement or condition, and the language is such as to suggest that if these are not complied with, the request may not be granted. No condition or requirement of any kind is even mentioned in either Matthew or Luke; but if the conditions in John are complied with, the assertion that the request will be granted is just as positive as those in Matthew and Luke.

The first of the group in John reads, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will

I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it."[1] The phrase, "in my name," occurs twice in this passage. Jesus and his disciples often used this phrase, indicating that for them it possessed a peculiar meaning of its own. When we understand what these primitive Eastern people meant by the word "name" we shall begin to realize how different was its signification to them from what it is to us in our frequent usage of the word to-day. Nor was this meaning confined to the Israelites, but was more or less prevalent throughout the entire East. The "name" meant more to them than a mere designation distinguishing one person from another; it meant some quality

[1] John XIV. 13, 14. In the Revised Version the concluding sentence reads, "If ye shall ask *me* anything in my name, that will I do"; and a marginal note states: "Many ancient authorities omit 'me.'" The American Revision omits the "me" from the body of the text, but adds a marginal note identical with that in the Revised Version. Thus some of the old manuscripts from which our copies of the New Testament are translated have the "me" in their text and others do not, showing that even in that early day there was a difference of opinion as to the exact words used.

or characteristic peculiar to the person or individual, which marked him as different from all others; or, as one writer who has studied the subject deeply says, "Names were the natural and adequate expressions of their innermost beings."

For example: after Jacob in important particulars had changed his entire nature, God appeared to him and said, "Thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name."[1] The word Jacob meant a supplanter. He had supplanted his father-in-law, Laban, by the scheming of years, and had secured a large amount of property which otherwise he would not have possessed. Afterward he became so changed in character that the name Jacob, or "Supplanter" would no longer apply to him, therefore his name was changed to Israel, which means a "Soldier of God," for that was what he had become.

So also Isaiah, in predicting the renovation of Jerusalem, declared, "Afterward thou shalt

[1] Gen. XXXV. 10.

be called, The City of Righteousness."[1] We read also in the Book of Revelation, "To him that overcometh will I give . . . a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it";[2] and in the next chapter, "Him that overcometh, . . . I will write upon him my new name."[3] In each case the new name was appropriate to the radical change that had taken place in the inner character of the person. For the same reason the name of Saul was changed to Paul.

Whatever Jesus asked for, he received at once. This was because of his peculiar characteristics and consequent method or manner of asking wherein he was distinctive from others and superior to them all. Whenever he asked the Father for anything he asked for it in his own way, and in exact accord with his own characteristics; therefore when he says, "If ye ask anything *in my name*," he means if we ask anything as he asks, or in his way of asking; he means that the asking shall be in full accord

[1] Isaiah I. 26. [2] Rev. II. 17. [3] Rev. III. 12.

with his own mental and spiritual state or condition. This is the significance of the phrase "in my name."

When two men, each with marked peculiarities of his own, go about any piece of work, like building a house or a boat, each prosecutes the work in his own way and as a result the work of each is like himself, partaking of his own personal peculiarities, and each receives his reward in accordance with his work; so Jesus says, "He that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward";[1] and in a similar manner of speech he says, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."[2]

But is it possible for us to ask with the same spirit and feeling of confidence with which Jesus asked? Can we have the same faith that he had, the same peculiarities of spiritual characteristics, the same perfection? When we ask these questions and fill ourselves with the

[1] Matt. X. 41. [2] John XIV. 13.

doubts which they suggest, we forget his teaching; or else can it be that we never have believed it? Listen once more to his words: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven. Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."[1] These are the plain and unmistakable words of Jesus, and they leave no place for doubt or uncertainty. Because it is possible for us to love our enemies it is also possible to attain this absolute perfection. He also said on another occasion, "All things are possible to him that believeth."[2] Then it is possible for us to have the same faith, the same spiritual characteristics, the same perfection that Jesus had. What interferes to prevent is each one's own failure to comply with the requirement, or his own personal doubt, his own lack of belief, his own "little faith."[3]

[1] Matt. V. 43–48. Revised Version.
[2] Mark IX. 23. [3] Matt. VI. 28–30.

This leads naturally to the next declaration of this group in John: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." [1]

In this declaration a variation is made in the essential condition from asking "in my name" to "abiding," but the real difference is not so great as at first appears. The preceding analysis shows the necessity of a mental condition like that possessed by Jesus; but here the simple requirement of the mere existence of the condition is changed into the necessity for its permanent continuance. There must be an abiding in the spirit of Jesus the Christ, and not only in his spirit but also in his words. "If ye abide in me" calls for a continuous living in him, or as he lived, and also for the living and abiding presence of his words in the minds of those who would be his disciples. If this is done, then "ye may ask

[1] John XV. 7. Both the Revised Version and the American Revision have the word "whatsoever" in the place of "what," but neither makes any other change.

whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

The third and last of this group of declarations introduces yet another form of words, thus: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." [1]

Thus in these three propositions are given three distinctly different basic and essential conditions on which depends a favorable response to the request. In the first, the asking is to be in the name of Jesus, who will grant the request; in the second, the requirement is an abiding in his spirit, or a continuous living as he lived; in the third, it is the Father whom we are to ask in Jesus' name. The

[1] John XVI. 23, 24. The emphatic introduction, "Verily, verily, I say unto you," appears in full in both the Revised Version and in the American Revision, but each alike vary the succeeding declaration so that it reads: "If ye shall ask anything of the Father, He will give it you in my name." The remainder of the declaration is unchanged.

one certain and unchangeable result of living up to the truths as taught by Jesus in these passages from John is that our requests will be granted. In the statements, "Ye shall receive" and "It shall be done," there is no shadow of doubt or uncertainty.

These expressions of Jesus which constitute the topic of this chapter assume a new and greater importance if we accept his own statement of their source and authority. He says of himself on this subject: "I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things."[1] And again, "I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. . . . Whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."[2] Therefore the words which he uttered concerning prayer, how to pray, etc., have their power and authority as from the Father Himself.

Although we often read these words of Jesus

[1] John VIII. 28. [2] John XII. 49, 50.

and nominally accept them as true, few of us, I fear, really attach any especial importance to them as vital working propositions. The trouble is not with the words themselves, but with the estimation in which they are held, — with the general failure of men to have a real belief in their validity; consequently we do not even attempt to put them to practical use in the way that Jesus advised. But he followed his own directions and successfully wrought out the results which he said would follow such application of his rules.

The stupendous object which he sought was nothing less than to free the whole world from every mark or trace of any error, wrong, or evil. At the end of his career on earth, though he had gained only a meager handful of followers, none of whom were bound to him or to the service of his cause by any vow, and all of whom deserted him in his dire extremity, yet he did not despair nor doubt the result, but he looked forward with supreme confidence to the final and complete success of all his

efforts. In that hour he said to his Father, "I have finished the work that Thou gavest me to do."[1] Though in every way these words were flatly contradicted by all outward appearances, yet with a confidence born of knowledge of spiritual truth, he resigned himself and his work into the hands of his Father. We should accept and believe his words with the same serenity and confidence that he manifested; for it was in the midst of the closing scenes of his earthly career that he said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."[2]

Men have looked in every direction except the right one for an explanation of what they call the impracticability of his statements and for reasons why they should not do the things he advised. Most absurd of all is the theory which they have evolved out of their own failure to understand the situation cor-

[1] John XVII. 4.

[2] Matt. XXIV. 35; Mark XIII. 31; Luke XXI. 33; and context.

rectly, and which has found wide acceptance: that Jesus confined his expressions to the domain of spirit, and that his words have no reference to materiality or earthly things, and that he did not include them among the objects over which he held dominion. They accept this interpretation in spite of the fact that he fed the hungry with material food which he provided in a most wonderful way, that he never was oblivious to any physical wants nor denied any physical request; and that, by his command, he not only exacted the obedience of physical objects but taught his disciples to do likewise.

Surely such limitations of his work as those above indicated were never suggested by him, nor do they apply to any of the propositions which are considered in this chapter, for these are without limitation in any direction. Each man is a distinct individual, as though he were the only man, and he is master of all things through his creation in the image of God, and also through his relation to the Father as re-

vealed by Jesus, for the Father will always grant the petition of any one of His children. Man is left entirely free in his asking. All the objects in the whole boundless universe are open to his choice wherever he may range, and all are subject to his asking. It is all merely taking Jesus at his word as we would any trusted friend in whom we have confidence, and if we follow his directions we shall make no mistakes.

VI

HAVE GOD'S FAITH

As Jesus and the Twelve were returning to Jerusalem after having spent the night at Bethany, they perceived that something very wonderful had happened to the tree by the wayside, to which Jesus had looked in vain for figs the evening before. For once, Peter's self-confidence deserted him and, though overflowing with curiosity, he could do no more than call attention to the condition of the tree as it appeared that morning. The evening before, it had been flourishing; now it was withered. "How did it happen?" was his unexpressed question.

Recognizing that Peter's desire for an explanation of the incident was shared by the others also, Jesus gave them in response a broad general statement of the principles

underlying the whole subject, as was not unusual with him in similar instances, instead of merely a brief answer to the specific question implied by Peter. This reply is of immense importance because it includes within its scope an explanation, in large part, of the method by which he performed his wonderful works, thus enabling others to do the same things that he did and thus making possible the fulfillment of his prophecy: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father." [1]

Both Matthew and Mark give an account of the occurrence, but Luke and John are silent on this subject. Matthew omits entirely some items that are given by Mark, abbreviates others, and adds one that Mark omits. Mark's account is usually the briefest of the Synoptics, but in this instance it is the fullest. The two accounts of this incident as they appear in the

[1] John XIV. 12. Revised Version.

King James Version are here presented side by side:

MATT. XXI. 21, 22	MARK XI. 22–25
Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.	And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.
And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.	Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.
	And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any.

As recorded by Mark, Jesus' answer to Peter is naturally divisible into four parts, and its scope and character indicate clearly that he did not intend the explanation of the circumstance for the wondering disciples alone,

nor even for that immediate occasion only, because it applies to all similar circumstances and must have been designed for the instruction of all of God's children.

In the King James Version, according to the translation in Mark, Jesus began his answer by saying, "Have faith in God," but the marginal reading is, "Have the faith of God." If we change this last form so that it reads, "Have God's faith," we shall have a distinctly English form of words and shall also retain the exact idea of the marginal reading. Because this form is true to the English mother tongue, it perhaps conveys more meaning to ears trained to the English language than the other.

To some it may seem like blind and unreasoning self-assumption or self-conceit for a man to claim for himself that he has or may have God's faith, but the first chapter of Genesis declares the fact that God created man in His own image and after His likeness, and then, evidently in order that there may

be no mistake about it, the statement is repeated in another form, "In the image of God created He him," that is, in close similarity to Himself.[1]

By teaching all mankind to call God our Father,[2] Jesus endorses and emphasizes the fact of our similarity to God, as it had never been done before his day. If we accept this truth in its fullness, — and it is the very foundation of the teaching of Jesus, — a man is indeed a child of God, and as such he must possess in a marked degree at least some of the qualities of his Father, and must be rightfully entitled to use them; hence when Jesus earnestly entreats us to have and to exercise God's faith, it manifestly becomes both our duty and our privilege to do so. Independently of any statements in the Bible, and reasoning accurately from incontestable facts, the soundest logic forces upon us the conclusion that the real man, the spiritual man, must

[1] Gen. I. 26, 27.

[2] Matt. VI. 9, especially; and in many other places.

be similar to God, his Father.[1] Both revelation and reason unite in the declaration that the spirit of each individual is of the divine spirit, that the life of each is of the divine life, and thus each is an emanation from the infinite spirit and the infinite life of God Himself. Each man is indeed God's child, and Paul showed that he fully recognized this fact when he said that we are "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ."[2] This is directly suggested, if not actually included, in every expression of Jesus where he so distinctly asserts that our relationship to God is that of a child to its parent.

Then, because of this relationship, there is not the slightest presumption in claiming for ourselves this faith and its accompanying power. Because we are His children we have an inalienable and indisputable right to have and to exercise God's faith. This faith is indeed ours, and ours to use; moreover, it is

[1] *A Search after Ultimate Truth*, Chapter XXXVII.
[2] Romans VIII. 17; Gal. IV. 7; Rev. XXI. 7.

our duty to use it in all right ways as Jesus did, for ourselves and for all our brethren. On the contrary, all through the centuries we have been denying our birthright and thrusting away from ourselves the greatest capacities, privileges, and duties that properly belong to us by divine right.

But what is this "faith of God," or God's faith, to which man is so fully entitled? Let us see. When God said, "Let there be light," is it conceivable that there was the slightest waver or shadow of doubt in the infinite mind that there would be light? And when He said, "Let the dry land appear," was there any possibility of the slightest doubt that it would appear? And so on through the whole series of the events of creation, the Genesis story, like the refrain of a great poem, takes up the chant, "God *said* and it was so"; He spake the word and the event followed as daylight follows dawn. It is incredible that with all the boundless inclusiveness of God's infinite intelligence, power, and ability He could

possibly have had the slightest doubt that what He said would come to pass exactly as He said it. These facts and conditions of creation constitute an illustrative definition of God's faith, and it is faith like this that Jesus tells us to have, and because we are all God's children it is our heritage.

To Jesus his sonship was constantly a vivid and actual reality and he clearly and fully understood its meaning, therefore he was able at all times to use this faith. When he said to the leper, "Be thou clean," it was his realization of this faith that gave power to his words, and the leper was instantly healed. This act was Godlike but, since every one is to realize his own sonship as fully as Jesus did, then each may exercise this same faith, and thereby do as great works as he did. For in confirmation of this he said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do." Therefore, "Have God's faith." Man may well pause

in honor and reverence before himself in the recognition of this potency within himself.

To attain to God's faith through implicit belief in the Christ and his statements is the first work for every one of Jesus' disciples. Let him not stand idle and indifferent, cheating himself with his own fear of the impossibility of its attainment. That is the lying evasion of ignorance or contented indolence. Jesus never told any one to do anything that is either wrong or impossible; yet he told his disciples to have this supreme faith, which is the faith of God. He told them a great many things that require faith for their accomplishment; and often he reproved them and upbraided the world for lack of faith.

Jesus manifested varying degrees of emotion with regard to the faith of others, ranging from his lament because of faithlessness[1] to his exclamation of surprise addressed to the centurion whose servant was sick, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."[2] Its

[1] Matt. XVII. 17. [2] Luke VII. 9.

importance was primal with him, yet, even on the one occasion when he was appealed to by his disciples to increase their faith, he gave them no instruction. Not even in response to the request of his disciples did he tell them how to acquire faith, for faith is elemental, and more or less inherent in the individual. Though its attainment may be suggested in countless ways, yet it cannot be communicated from one to another, any more than one can tell another how to move the hand, how to think, or how to love. Every one knows something of faith instinctively and may know more, for it belongs to every human being by birthright. Then let each assert his birthright, have confidence in himself, and cultivate this faith, for it is exercised by every one in some degree. Say what we will, no man was ever entirely devoid of faith, and if he earnestly desires it, by asking and seeking he may have more, and continually more, until at last he makes the words of Jesus true and actually possesses God's faith. It is the exact opposite

of doubt, and as doubt is put out of the heart, faith comes in and takes its rightful place.

The first step toward the attainment of God's faith is to believe that Jesus understood the reason for all that he asked of us; the next step is to trust him and his word in all things; and then to rest secure in that confidence, ready to do as he said and to cultivate and practise not only faith in God but God's faith. This is not accomplished by an arbitrary act of the will, nor by blind acceptance of the words of Jesus, nor by any equally blind acceptance of what some one else has said; but it may be accomplished by a patient, careful, unprejudiced investigation of his words and acts, together with the earnest desire to know him as we come to know others. We make this intimacy too wonderful, and surround it with too many imaginary difficulties, and in this way we defeat our own objects. Of course we cannot talk with him, but we have his sayings and some account of his acts, and if we take his words in their simplicity and sincerity,

they will reveal him as he was and enable us to become acquainted with him. Our particular object in this, however, should be to perfect ourselves in the knowledge of God, that we may manifest our true sonship.

Thus as we learn to know Jesus better we shall come into a larger understanding of God. Faith as Jesus taught is founded upon the understanding of God and of man's relation to Him; and is attained through our realization of this relationship and through *knowing* what our divine inheritance from God really means. With such faith we can go on to any accomplishment, and attain to the very heights of wisdom and power.

VII

HOW THE MOUNTAIN MAY BE MOVED

THERE is no record that Jesus or any of his disciples ever removed a mountain, nor that he ever told any one to do so, but in his explanation of the incident of the fig-tree he makes use of a hypothetical case that is most striking. In setting forth the method by which the mountain may be moved, Jesus presented the principle that underlies all acts of this kind, including his own miracles; and on this illustrative incident he founds his broad general rule applicable to every similar case.

Let us suppose that we have read the accounts of the miracles as the child reads, without adding or subtracting anything because of preconceived ideas. This is not easy for the adult unless his mind has been so trained that, in any given instance, he can reject all the thoughts and opinions in connection with this

and allied subjects which for years he has been unconsciously accumulating from a multitude of experiences and suggestions. If this is done, the condition is relieved of many complications and we have only to follow the definite instructions of Jesus.

How is the mountain to be moved? Jesus answers this question in language so simple that any one can understand. It is merely to say to the mountain as one would to a trained animal or to a man, "Be thou removed to yonder place." That is all. We can all give this command, but it is only to him who can do so "and not doubt in his heart," that assurance is given that the mountain will be moved.

Man should have, and is to have, God's faith. That is the central thought of the whole illustration. Is the removal of the mountain beyond the power of the faith that created it? Jesus would not have given this instruction if it were not both right and possible for every human being to have God's faith; therefore it is the privilege of every one to culti-

vate this faith until, in the full meaning of the words, he does consciously possess it. Until this has been accomplished, the idea of the magnitude of the work and of its impossibility thrusts itself upon the mind of him who is about to speak the word, so that, in direct violation of the command not to have a doubt in his heart, he allows uncertainty to permeate his entire being and destroy all possibility of success. If he had complied with Jesus' instruction and had acquired absolute faith, with what confidence would he have given the command to the mountain! There would not have been either hesitation or doubt in his heart and, as Jesus said, the mountain would have obeyed. But faith, when shackled by doubt, will not remove the smallest heap of sand.

The removal of the mountain seems an impossibility, and that idea and its offspring fill the mind to the exclusion of everything else. "I cannot do it!" — is the insistent thought. But Jesus has not told you, nor me,

nor any one else personally to remove the mountain. If that were his meaning he would have said so, for no man has rivaled Jesus in accuracy of language. We need to get clearly in mind what he did tell his disciples: it was first, "Have the faith of God"; second, "Say to this mountain, Be thou removed"; third, "Have no doubt in his heart"; fourth, "Believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass"; fifth, and, doing these things, "He shall have whatsoever he saith." Such is the method and such the result. Any one can do these things in that way; if this were not so Jesus would not have made these assertions. To have God's faith is first and most important, because it is a fundamental and indispensable requisite; that accomplished, all the rest follows easily and naturally. One is to be satisfied with nothing less than the attainment of this supreme faith! These are the things Jesus tells us to do; he does not tell *us* to remove the mountain but, having God's faith, he directs us to tell the mountain to

"be removed," which is widely different from removing it ourselves. A careful examination of his instructions will dispel all doubt about his meaning.

He begins the second part of his answer to Peter with the Greek word most frequently translated "verily." It is used to call particular attention to a statement,[1] and in this place he adds to it the emphatic declaration, "I say unto you," a form which he uses only when he is about to tell his disciples something new which is of great importance, or perhaps to state a disagreement between his own position and the prevailing opinion. The use of both these terms indicates that what he is about to say is something to which he wishes his disciples to give close and serious attention. The incident of the fig-tree had already assumed great importance in their eyes, and evidently he desired to secure their undivided attention,

[1] "From the lips of Jesus this word points to the fact that either the thing is true in him, or he will make it or keep it true." Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, pp. 80, 81.

because his words were to be not only explanatory of what had happened to the tree, but they were to reveal an ability or power resident in all human beings which was heretofore unsuspected and unknown, but which if known, understood, and used, would revolutionize their attitude toward the whole material world.

Having made this introduction, Jesus begins with the unequivocal and all-inclusive pronoun, "whosoever," thus showing that the statement which he is about to make is not limited in its application to any special man or to any class of men, either with or without unusual experience, advantages, prominence, or attainments to distinguish them from their fellow men. "Whosoever" includes all men, without exception, whether Jew or Gentile, ignorant or educated, high or low, rich or poor, disciple or antagonist, — no one could be shut out from any present or prospective privileges, advantages, or responsibilities.

"Whosoever shall say unto this mountain." The strong probability is that when Jesus

said this he was standing within sight of the Mount of Olives, which is in plain view all the way from Bethany — where he had lodged the night before — to Jerusalem, where he would spend the day.[1] This mountain has been known to every resident of Jerusalem from its earliest occupation until to-day, and to his hearers not even the city itself was more familiar. The ridge of which the mountain forms a part is about two and a half miles long. Its summit towers about two hundred feet above its broad base, where it has stood unchanged since the days of Abraham, the first object in all that vicinity to be touched by the rays of the rising sun. In imagination it is easy to picture Jesus standing in the midst of his disciples, pointing to the sturdy mountain bathed in the glory of the early morning sunlight and saying with all the intensity of his impressive earnestness, "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea; and

[1] Matt. XXI. 17, 18.

shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass; he shall have it."

A thing seemingly more impossible could not be imagined; but there is not in Jesus' words the slightest indication of any doubt or of any possible alternative; it is this and nothing else that is to be done. With increasing intensity of utterance, he adds the essential and unavoidable condition, "and shall not doubt in his heart," thus making faith the single and inflexible condition upon which success depends. Then, lest some alleviation or modification of the proposition should be imagined, he explains and emphasizes his meaning by adding, "but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass." This is in exact accord with the opening direction of Jesus, because such an act would indeed be an expression of God's faith. He is entirely consistent, and these words clearly illustrate what he meant when in the beginning he said, "Have the faith of God."

The proposition is definitely stated and is clearly understandable. With God's faith there are not any impossibilities; so there now remains only the coherent and reasonable concluding declaration, "he shall have it"; or, as it is in the King James Version, "he shall have whatsoever he saith," which is substantially the same as the Revised Version.[1] Any other conclusion would be illogical because anything less than this would indicate a limitation to the power of the faith of God. "Whosoever" begins the assertion, — whosoever will follow these instructions of Jesus, — he shall have whatsoever he saith. The language of the entire sentence is straight to the point, simple, unequivocal, exceptionless, and without modification; like the mountain before him, it is broad-based, symmetrical, and rises steadily to the final climax. The absence of any expression of doubt is as wonderful as anything in the proposition itself. Under

[1] "It shall be to him," is a literal and exact translation of the Greek words in this place.

the circumstances, and following the bold simplicity and directness of the instructions, no other ending was possible.

KING JAMES VERSION

And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou *removed*, and *be thou* cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that *those things which he saith shall come* to pass; he shall have *whatsoever he saith.*

Therefore I say unto you, *What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them*, and ye shall have them.

And *when* ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any.[1]

REVISED VERSION

And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou *taken up* and cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that *what he saith cometh* to pass; he shall have *it.* Therefore I say unto you, *All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them*, and ye shall have them. And *whensoever* ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any *one.*

To show the variations in this passage between the King James and the Revised Ver-

[1] Mark XI. 22–25.

sions these are here placed side by side, the differences being indicated by italics. The only essential variation is in the tense of one verb, a change that would not have been made by the revisers except for the most compelling verbal reasons. No important change is made in the briefer account of the same incident by Matthew.

VIII

THE RULE FOR ALL PRAYING

THE third part of the answer to Peter constitutes a broad general rule which includes within its brief but definite and explicit terms the method for all prayer.

Referring to what he has already said as a basis on which to rest what he is about to say, Jesus begins with, "Therefore," which is equivalent to saying, "Because the preceding statement is correct"; and with that for an introduction and a reason for what follows, he throws the whole weight of his entire personality into his distinctive and strongly emphatic expression, "I say unto you." By this he asserts, of his own knowledge and understanding, and with intense solemnity, that what he is about to say is true though all the world may testify to the contrary.

What follows is as remarkable for its inclu-

siveness as the preceding part of this answer to Peter, which he begins with the pronoun "whosoever," and which thus includes all human beings without exception. Similarly, Jesus now introduces this part of the answer with the unrestricted pronoun "whatsoever," emphasized by the intensive words "all things," so that the expression reads "all things whatsoever." This must include everything in the entire universe, whether large or small, and of every kind, whether good, bad, or indifferent — even the most improbable. Thus the statement introduced by these words is as inclusive of things as its predecessor is of persons. In this way Jesus introduces his universal rule for prayer. Not one person in all the world is forgotten, nor is one thing in all the universe omitted. By no possibility could it be made more inclusive; there is neither first nor last, but all are on an equality.

The rest of the clause is equally inclusive: "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for." The pronoun "ye" makes this expression dis-

tinctly personal. Although it was addressed to the disciples, it is also for every one in all the world to take exclusively to himself in all its fullness. Thus through that little group of disciples listening to him there by the roadside in that early morning, Jesus is addressing the whole world of humanity, with regard not only to that particular incident and time but to all incidents and for all time.

"All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for" — everything that you desire, without limitation, whatever its kind or character. By some possibility some may think that "pray" and "ask" have such different significations that one of these words might not include all that the other does; hence Jesus uses both words, and thus, however diverse their meanings, he includes all that can possibly be meant by either. Language more broadly inclusive than this is not possible, for in this connection we have "*whosoever*," "*all things whatsoever*," the pronoun "*ye*" which includes every one who prays, and "*pray* and *ask* for."

Then comes next in order the one indispensable requirement of the rule, "Believe that ye *have* received them" (Revised Version); that is, — believe that ye have already received whatever ye asked for. Its importance cannot be overrated, and the tense of the verb is so unusual for the immediate connection in which it occurs, that we may say without exaggeration that it took the Christian world more than two and a half centuries to include this form of words in their translation; but it is in exact accord with the idea of God's faith as narrated in the Genesis story of creation, "*God said*" and "*it was so.*" Whatsoever He saith, *is!* *This* is God's faith.

On this basis and under the conditions set forth in answer to Peter, logically there can be only one result and that is stated in the concluding clause, "*and ye shall have them.*" Whatsoever your request may be, if you have fulfilled the one requirement, "ye shall have it."

This, then, is his Great Rule directing all

mankind, under all possible circumstances and conditions, how to pray: "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them and ye shall have them."

The comprehensiveness, brevity, and completeness of this answer to Peter are phenomenal. Given the basis of God's faith, it is all seen to be divine, unalterable truth. The wonder lies in the ability, first to perceive such truth, and then to formulate the simple logic of the explanation and the rule. Only one who had done what Jesus did could have made such a statement; no one else had the wisdom to understand the conditions and then to formulate them; both in form and substance it is unique.

In the fourth and last part of his answer to Peter, is given in Mark an instruction that is too often lost sight of by those who study the teaching of Jesus: "And whensoever ye stand praying, *forgive*, if ye have aught against any one."[1] Forgiveness occupies a central

[1] Mark XI. 25. Revised Version.

place in the one prayer Jesus made for the use of all men, and it forms an important part of the instructions we are considering. Every one who carefully considers the subject cannot fail to perceive the appropriateness of this expression at the close of the answer to Peter. It suggests, even to the careless and unthinking, that forgiveness is necessary, and that it has its practical advantage to all those who would attempt to follow the example of Jesus in his work for his fellow men.

To him who has entered with his Father into that retired place of himself, and in entering, has closed and locked the door to all behind him, this advice is not necessary, because, in accord with Jesus' other teaching, in that place there cannot be any sense of inharmony with any creature in the whole universe; but for the benefit of us all it is well that Mark did not forget these concluding words.

Let this forgiveness be what Jesus meant it to be — complete forgiveness in all its fullness — the forgiveness that we ourselves ask of

our Father in heaven. "Forgive us our trespasses *as* we forgive those who trespass against us." Would we have God remember our iniquities? Then forgive completely. The possession of the power to remove mountains or to do what one will is not a dangerous possession, because, inseparable from the recognition and exercise of this power, is the recognition and exercise of the divine attribute of love, which is an essential of *complete* forgiveness. There must be that absolute forgiveness which recognizes no enemy and which puts all wrong out of sight so that man himself is of "purer eyes than to behold evil,"[1] and which finds its perfect expression in love for enemies. In that forgiveness the enemy has disappeared, leaving only the dearly beloved brother. Thus love is supreme over all.

Each one who loves his enemies manifests the divine truth. Jesus manifested the divine truth in word and deed as no man has ever done before or since, but as man will hereafter;

[1] Hab. I. 13.

for the truth that he showed us — the truth that he expressed — has not been lost to the world and never will be.

In this discussion the words of Jesus have been presented in detached phrases and disconnected sentences. They are now given in one connected whole, so that the relation of each part to the other parts and to the whole may be seen at a glance. The Revised Version has been followed, and the whole has been broken up into lines so as to allow each separate idea to stand out by itself:

"Have faith in God.
Verily I say unto you,
Whosoever shall say unto this mountain,
Be thou taken up and cast into the sea;
And shall not doubt in his heart,
But shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass;
He shall have it.
Therefore I say unto you,
All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for,

Believe that ye have received them,
And ye shall have them.
And whensoever ye stand praying,
Forgive,
If ye have aught against any one."

It may be helpful to present here an analysis of this answer to Peter:

The foundation is:

"Have the faith of God."

or

Have God's faith.

The key words are:

"Whosoever"

and

"Whatsoever."

The key expressions are:

"And shall not doubt in his heart,

but

Shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass."

This may be stated as follows:

"Whosoever shall say —
And shall not doubt in his heart,

But shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass,

He shall have it;"

or

"He shall have whatsoever he saith."

The Great Rule:

"All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for,

Believe that ye have received them

And ye shall have them."

In the practical application of these instructions, if one has God's faith, he knows that the work is already done and he can only look on it as completed as he speaks the words. He has no need to go over the work again, nor to give it any further consideration; but he may well direct his thoughts to the infinite All-Father in thankfulness that He has heard and answered his petition.

All the preceding propositions rest solely on having God's faith, but in another series existing in John an important condition is that the asking shall be "in my name." This introduces another and seemingly different

consideration, the understanding of which lies in the meaning of the phrase "in my name." This is clearly allied to a number of other similar phrases, as, "for my name's sake," "in the name of," etc., but in them all the prominent idea is the same.

The word "name," particularly in earlier times and among all more primitive people, frequently indicated some distinguishing personal or individual peculiarity or characteristic. As we have already seen, a close relationship was supposed to exist between a man and his name. This understanding and usage of the word "name" prevailed to such an extent that sometimes when a marked change occurred in the character of an individual his name was changed, as was done in the case of Abram, Jacob, and Saul. This is still further exemplified in Revelation, where "a new name" was conferred for the same special reason,[1] exemplifying the belief and showing that the idea con-

[1] Rev. II. 17; III. 12. See also *Encyclopedia Biblica*, subject, "Names," Cols. 3264–3269; and Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, subject, "Name," Vol. 3, p. 478.

tinued some time after the days of Jesus. Consequently, this significance of a person's name must have been more or less prevalent and well understood among the people in Judea for a long time. This shows clearly that the phrase "in my name" meant at that time something more than it does now, — merely a verbal designation to distinguish one man from another.

Thus the expression as used in those days must have had direct reference to one's inner or spiritual nature. He who asks "in his name" must ask as the Christ himself would have asked. This leads us back to the necessity for asking with God's faith, because only the possession of God's faith could produce the spiritual and mental conditions that would enable one to ask as Jesus the Christ asked.

This class of expressions forming a part of Jesus' statements relative to the use of prayer and to its answer is largely found in the midst of his conversation with his disciples during or at the close of the Last Supper, when he was

preparing them for his departure to the Father and giving them directions about their own future course. The last of these expressions is distinctively characteristic of the whole class, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you," is another of the characteristic utterances of Jesus on the occasion of the Last Supper, and is strictly in keeping with his other expressions at this time. It presents yet a further condition necessary in order truly to become his follower and is also a requisite for the perfect attitude in praying. It is more than a mere addition to his other sayings on this subject; it is an explanation of them all, and binds them all into one complete whole.[1]

[1] Regarding the expressions "abide in me," and "in my name" see also *Chapter V.*

IX

BELIEVE THAT YE HAVE RECEIVED

"BELIEVE that ye *have* received." Our request is already granted. That which we are asking for is ours now, and it always has been ours. Jesus says to us, With God's faith, believe that it not only *is now*, but *always has been*. The thought already was in the infinite mind from the beginningless beginning. It only waited to be expressed, or the expression only waited to be recognized by us. God said, "Let there be light, and there was light"; that light which had always existed in the infinite mind was then expressed for other minds. It is the same with all else, if we but open our eyes to see. We *have* received. It is only our own blindness which hinders us from seeing and knowing. We have only to "*Believe* that ye *have* received them" — "*and ye shall have them.*" These

words taken as they stand are among the most wonderful ever spoken and they have the same directness, simplicity, and positiveness in form of expression, as well as the same fidelity to the truth, that was characteristic of all of Jesus' utterances. No other teacher ever presented these characteristics in their perfection, but Jesus knew and understood the underlying principle and its absolute unchangeableness. *Principle never varies.* Therefore *because* principle has no exceptions there could be no doubt in the mind of Jesus. Consequently he would have us free ourselves from all doubt and with unwavering faith believe his words: "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them and ye shall have them."

Jesus recognized the possibility of compliance with this requirement or he would not have uttered these words; yet men have assumed that it is impossible to believe that they have received before they possess some proof of the fact, and thus they have shut themselves out

from an understanding of some of the great truths that Jesus proclaimed to the world for the benefit of all mankind. See in what a simple way his own actions in that great event narrated in the eleventh chapter of John — the raising of Lazarus — exactly accord with this rule as well as prove the accuracy of his words. The raising of Lazarus shows that the rule is not an empty form of words, but the actual method of procedure which Jesus himself used; and it illustrates perfectly the meaning he wished to convey when he uttered this statement.

Jesus had come with Mary and Martha to the grave of Lazarus, and he told the attendants to take away the stone that closed it. That power which could raise Lazarus from the dead could also roll away the stone; but Jesus asked them to roll away the stone because this was a part of the work which they could do. Martha, with her usual practical sense, remonstrated because Lazarus had been dead four days already. To this Jesus responded, "Said

I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" Then they took away the stone from the entrance to the place where the dead man had been laid. Within was only the silence of death.

"Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou *hast* heard me, and I knew that Thou hearest me always."[1] The faith of God is in these words and they touch the heights of sublimity. This expression of thankfulness shows that Jesus believed that he had already received what he had asked for; that he complied with the requirement of his own rule — "Believe that ye *have* received" — before there was any indication that his request had been granted.

Silence still reigned within the grave; there had been no sign to indicate that any change had occurred there; but Jesus at once called with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." In response to this call Lazarus immediately came forth. What better proof could there be

[1] John XI. 41, 42.

that God's faith is sufficient for all things! The simplicity of all this, its magnificence, and the wonder of it are beyond words. When considering this incident with the most profound reverence, we must not forget that he said not long afterwards, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father." This declaration binds us all to him, and if anything were lacking to confirm the position we have taken, this would supply it. Well may we pause in awe before the vision of all that is man's by reason of his divine birthright. Let us realize the truth of what Jesus taught us, — that God is indeed our Father and that we are indeed His children, — and let it never be forgotten that herein is for each of us a practical rule for life and living which may be applied every day and every hour.

In this marvelous act Jesus not only complied with his own rule in every particular, but he also showed the absolute accuracy of several

of his other sayings. In a previous discussion with the Jews he had said, "The Son can do nothing of himself"; and later, on the same occasion he said, "I can of myself do nothing"; [1] and again, at the Last Supper, he told his disciples, "The Father abiding in me doeth His works." [2] The incident shows that Jesus did not do the works himself by his own strength or ability, but through the exercise within himself of the faith of God, and because of his request to the Father, the works were accomplished.

The words to be used in addressing the mountain, as given in Jesus' answer to Peter, imply that some power other than that contained either within the person speaking or within the mountain itself is involved. The command is: "Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea," not "Remove thyself and cast thyself into the sea." So he who wishes to follow in the Master's footsteps has but to remem-

[1] John V. 19, 30. Revised Version.
[2] John XIV. 10. Revised Version.

ber Jesus' words and to *know* that it is the Father who doeth the works in response to his request and that the works are not to be done by himself alone. Thus any insinuating doubt will easily be dispelled.

This entirely changes the man's personal attitude, for it impresses on his mind the fact that Jesus was correct when he said, "The Father doeth the works," and also the fact that they are done in response to the request of the son, who in his request is to exercise the faith of God. No man is to depend upon his own efforts, — he is never to forget that "*The Father doeth the works.*" This throws additional light on Jesus' statement: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father." Whoever believes in Jesus will believe his words and accept them in the fullness of their simple meaning.

If we really do believe in him we shall be the more careful to understand his instructions

thoroughly and to comply with them exactly, and we shall accept with gratitude the added power and responsibility which of necessity attend the true disciple of Jesus. With the faith of God, and with belief in the Christ, all stumbling blocks will disappear.

But let us look further at the requirement, "Believe that ye *have* received." In the Genesis story it is said that after the work of creation was completed, "God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was *very good.*"[1] Therefore man, who is made in the image and likeness of God, has in his very creation and in the creation of all things else, received every good thing he can possibly ask for, and has only to recognize this fact in order to know that he has already received every object of his request.

John, in his account of the creation says,

[1] Gen. I. 31. The phrase "very good" is descriptive of the whole creation as God had then made it. A literal translation of the Hebrew words represented by the English phrase "very good" is "good good," or good that is wholly good without anything in it but good, or perfect good only. This is perfection.

"All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made. That which hath been made was life in Him."[1] Thus all that was made was created out of the life of God; therefore, John also, by these words, shows us that man received from the Father the best things possible — even all created things in their divine perfection.

All this was emphasized by Jesus at the Last Supper, when he said of the bread, "This is my body," and of the wine, "This is my blood"; [2] thus clearly indicating that all bread and all wine, however they may appear, are of the one divine substance of the Father, God, the First Cause.

If, wholly independent of any Biblical statements, we attempt to follow the invariable law of causation, we shall unavoidably come upon *first cause;* and, since *first cause* was indeed first, it must stand alone. The rela-

[1] John I. 3, 4. Revised Version Margin.

[2] Matt. XXVI. 26–28; Mark XIV. 22–24; Luke XXII. 19, 20; 1 Cor. XI. 24, 25.

tions of cause and effect show that out of the substance of each cause came the substance of each effect and, whatever the distance between them, in this manner each cause is thus connected with first cause as its origin. Thus it follows that first cause, being either immediately or remotely the cause of all effects, is the cause of all that ever was, is, or ever will be, and its substance must necessarily be the one substance of all that is. But *First Cause* is nothing less than the Being to whom we give the names Creator and God. This conclusion agrees with the statements of John, and means that one substance, under many appearances and names, must be the one substance of all that exists. Thus incontrovertible reasoning from First Cause amply confirms the simple statement of Jesus at the Last Supper, without an appeal to any mysterious or unexplainable change; thus that which the disciples ate and drank was the identical substance of First Cause and it was, therefore, the same substance as the body and blood of Jesus the Christ.

This also explains the difficult statements regarding the Bread of Life as given in the sixth chapter of John.

Thus, wonderful as it all is, through an understanding of causation and First Cause, the creation story of Genesis,[1] the *Logos* introduction of John,[2] and the declaration of Jesus at the Last Supper are stripped of all their mystery, are harmonized, explained, and made both understandable and believable.

As related in the first chapter of Genesis, God placed the objects He had created under our dominion and consequently in our custody, and man was directed to hold them under his subjugation.[3] Everything was man's to do with as he pleased, therefore he did indeed receive all things "in the beginning" and they were all good. Man's dominion over everything is his earliest prerogative. Even if he

[1] *A Search after Ultimate Truth*, Chapter XXXVIII.

[2] "In the beginning was the *Word*." (Greek, *Logos*.) John I. 1. For a fuller explanation see *A Search after Ultimate Truth*, Chapter XXXIX.

[3] Gen. I. 26–28.

has neither claimed nor used this prerogative, yet it is his still, to have and to use when he will. If we accept this old story we at once see the reasonableness of the requirement in the Great Rule, "Believe that ye *have* received them."

Thus far this discussion has been confined to truth and its realities, but the question may arise, "Has not man received many things that are *not good?*" There appears to be another class of objects, circumstances, and conditions that has filled a large place in the attention of mankind and is known by various names, all of which may be included under the designation, "not-good" or "error."

We have no term in our language at once so adequate and comprehensive for our purpose as the word "error." By "error" we mean "the mistake, the wrong, the sin, the suffering, the falsehood, and whatever else is *not good.* An error is something different from what it ought to be; something which deviates from or is not conformable to accuracy, truth, or right,

or which wanders from the true course; it is a mistake, an inaccuracy, a falsity; an expression or manifestation of untruth; therefore a lie."[1] All sin and evil are manifestations of error, but not every error is sinful or morally wrong.

Man, in his ignorance, asks for the error and the wrong as well as for the truth and the right. He is free, and as the dictator of his own actions there is nothing but his own judgment to restrain him in the control of himself, not only in his actions but in his thoughts and desires. To him, error and wrong are realities which often seem desirable; therefore they come under the terms of the rule because man prays and asks for them. They also are included in the expression: "All things whatsoever that ye pray and ask for." Indeed, if we examine the history of the world, it will appear that man has asked for these more often and more earnestly than for the truth and the right. Has he not received them? He surely has. This is apparent in our own times, too, and

[1] *A Search after Ultimate Truth*, Section 279.

in our own immediate surroundings. In the turmoil of to-day we see the disastrous consequences of man's asking for the wrong and receiving in full measure that for which he has asked.

An examination of the general peculiarities and characteristics of this class reveals certain universal conditions, among the first of which is an entire distinction or difference from God and the things of God, so that all of this group is always arrayed in opposition to Him.[1] We might rest our consideration of the subject on a single argument: God is infinite, and therefore all; and since it is impossible that there could be more than all, then whatever is entirely distinct from God, however real its appearance may seem to be, must in the reality of things be unreal and non-existent. The belief, however, in the reality of evil in most of its forms is so extensive and firmly rooted in the imagination that further consideration seems to be required.

[1] *A Search after Ultimate Truth*, Chapters XXVI and XXXI.

A valid argument that is peculiarly appropriate in this connection rests upon the fact that every appearance of evil arises from *belief* in it; if that belief changes, the evil changes also in exact accord with the change of belief; remove the belief entirely and the evil totally disappears. "Error is to each person what he believes it to be; whatever the facts, the measure of the belief is the exact measure of the error, and as the belief changes, the error changes also." On the contrary, truth does not vary with the varying opinions in regard to it. "It is only error that is changed by change of belief; belief or disbelief can never change either a fact or a truth, for truth is unchangeable." [1]

We must not forget that principle never varies, and if we look for the not-good and believe in it, we receive it just in proportion to our belief. But the not-good is wholly non-existent; it has no reality beyond man's own belief, and if he no longer has the belief

[1] *A Search after Ultimate Truth*, Chapter XXXII.

which gave to him all the reality it ever possessed, it then ceases to have the appearance of reality. From the instant that his belief ceases, he recognizes that he is free from the condition produced by it. For example, if he has been subject to a disease, he is healed.

This fact regarding evil in every one of its forms needs no argument to show its entire agreement with the instruction of Jesus: "Believe that ye have received them and ye shall have them." These words of Jesus, like a two-edged sword, are just as effective if man in his ignorance desires earnestly the wrong things. If the choice is the wrong, the result will be more wrong and suffering, but if the choice is the truth and the good, the result will be more and greater good. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" [1]

It may well be asked why we should try to alleviate the suffering of the world if it is un-

[1] Matt. VII. 15–20. See also *A Search after Ultimate Truth*, Section 41, including footnote, and for a fuller explanation, the whole of Parts Four and Five.

real. The answer is simple. Because to those who seem to be in a condition to need help their suffering is very real. As in every case where the not-good presents an appearance and is believed in, *to the believer* it is a reality.

Why do you consider it necessary to wake a person in a nightmare? You know that his dream is absolutely unreal. He may have a thousand wild ideas which you know are not realities. Although to the sleeper they are realities, to the onlooker they are nothing, absolutely nothing. Why should we wake him? We wake him from his dream that he may see himself as he is. So with regard to all the suffering and sin in the world; we would wake people out of their dreams, so that they may see themselves as they are and avoid all errors. The victim of the hypnotist, even in his waking moments, believes the conditions imposed upon him are realities and acts accordingly. The world is full of hallucinations which are believed to be real and which work their

consequences in what in their turn are called realities.

We should not forget Paul's advice: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Jesus said to the rich young man, "Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor," and he counseled the giving of alms without question to whosoever asked. He himself went about healing the sick, relieving the unfortunate, and he never failed to alleviate material wants. Until the entire world comes to the full realization of the truth, there will be the hungry to feed, the sick to visit, the naked to clothe, the sorrowing to cheer. As long as we consider food, shelter, and raiment necessary to our own comfort, we must expect others to do the same. This answers the question why we should try to relieve the wants of the world.

Jesus saw the errors of the people and endeavored to wake them from their delusions by showing them the truth, by showing them the way, the truth, and the life. They were

going in the wrong direction; he pointed out the right way, and gave them the light by which they might see it. There is not an error in the world, whether moral or physical, that he did not point out and show how to avoid, and especially in the case of physical infirmities he demonstrated by practical example their nothingness. From the slightest physical ailment to the worst, even unto death itself, he showed that each is nothing — illusion. At his touch or in response to his word, they all disappeared into the nothingness whence they came. He taught his disciples to do the same things that he did and he said that they should do even greater things.

Jesus preached the avoidance of sin or wrong in every form. He did not theorize in relation to it; he simply told us to let it alone. He gave us rules for the living of the true Christian life; and if men will follow these rules, then, in the exact degree in which they do follow them, will all sin and suffering entirely disappear.

These two divisions, the realities and the unrealities, or those things that are and those that seem to be but are not, include all that can come within the range of thought. All the realities that exist were ours from the beginning, and Jesus only asks us to believe the truth about them, namely, that they are good even unto perfection. The unrealities that seem to be but are not have no existence except such as our belief gives them, and therefore they are creatures of our belief and subject to that belief. Thus the teaching of Jesus in his rule for praying rests on a solid foundation of truth and is correct. "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye *have* received them, and ye shall have them."

It is often said, "If there is no evil why did Jesus so continually refer to it?" The human race believed in the existence and reality of sin; it was their language, and the only one they could understand. There was a better language than the provincial dialect of the people of Judea in his day, but he used their

language. If he had used another they would not have understood him. So when he told Nicodemus he must be born again,[1] poor Nicodemus, though a master teacher of Israel, did not know what Jesus was talking about. Many since have been in as great perplexity, yet here was one place where Jesus spoke of the spirit.

So, too, the marvelous discourse on the Bread of Life in the sixth chapter of John was puzzling both to the Jews and to the disciples. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" they asked. Jesus replied, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life." When the disciples murmured at this, Jesus, apparently contradicting his previous statement, explains his meaning by adding, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life."

It is, then, important to bear in mind that Jesus used the every-day language familiar

[1] John III. 3.

to those about him. Sometimes they failed to understand him because of the spiritual or mystic meaning that he gave to his words. The mere fact that he spoke of evil as they would speak of it does not mean that he acknowledged its reality. He did not declare the reality of sin, but they believed in its reality and he had to talk to them in some accord with their belief, so that they would understand him.

Jesus recognized the advantage which would come to us from dwelling in the truth and the truth alone. But he recognized, too, our recognition of the not-good, — the unrealities. He was aware, also, of his own recognition of error. Were it not so, he could not have been tempted, and he was tempted in all points like as we are. But he did not yield to the temptation. His recognition of the truth was so all-pervading, that, though tempted, he did not yield to temptation. He let the evil entirely alone. In his treatment of anger, for instance, he taught us so entirely to put anger

out of the heart that we shall not even know when another is angry with us. Again, Jesus said, "Resist not evil." If evil is a reality, this precept is utterly without foundation. Many religious men of the finest intellect have denied the authority of this precept because they could not understand it and thus saw no reason for it. Only on the basis that there is no evil to resist can this precept be sustained. Thus did Jesus teach the total avoidance of evil. He showed us the way to attain to those heights where we shall not enter into temptation, but shall let the light of truth shine through us; where we shall see the true character of the not-good and let it alone, as he did.

X

ASKING IS ESSENTIAL TO RECEIVING

AMONG the earlier words of Jesus regarding prayer is the declaration, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him,"[1] and immediately the questions arise, "Then what need to ask Him? Why does He wait for us to ask? Why does He not give us those things He knows we need? Would not a good father give without requiring his child to ask?" The answer is plain. Man is by creation free,[2] therefore God does not compel him to ask; He leaves him entirely free to ask or not as he chooses. "In the beginning" God endowed man with absolute freedom, consequently He leaves every man entirely free in regard to all his actions; and in that freedom, of course, is included the free-

[1] Matt. VI. 8.

[2] *A Search after Ultimate Truth*, Chapters XLIV and XLV.

dom of choice as to what he will have and what he will not have. It is indeed true that God has already given all things to man, but He does not thrust them upon his recognition. To thrust upon man that which he does not recognize he needs, and therefore does not consciously want nor ask for, would be to interfere with his freedom and to dominate him.

"God having given man freedom of choice and volition in the whole sphere of his personal activities, cannot, without interfering with that freedom, bring man to that perfection of being in His own image and after His likeness which He has designed and provided for him except through the consent and coöperation of the man himself."

God would not be God if He were not Himself free and able to do as He pleases, and man is like unto Him, is in His image and likeness. Therefore man also is free and has the power of self-control without any let or hindrance whatever. God, in His omniscience, would never deprive man of anything once conferred

upon him. Infinite Wisdom makes no mistakes, and Infinite Wisdom, which created man free, would not destroy that freedom; having made man free, God would leave him free.

This is the secret of the relationship between God and man. God in His infinite intelligence, His infinite wisdom, "knows what things man has need of before he asks Him," yet He waits for him to ask. He leaves man as He made him — *free*. Therefore God chooses to wait until man, in the exercise of his freedom, indicates his desires. The indication of those desires constitutes prayer; and the reason which makes prayer necessary is found in the fact that man *is* free; consequently prayer is an essential element of our relations to our Father.

We find the reverse of this in the conditions of human society. Men are continually thrusting upon their fellow-beings things or conditions that they do not want, and this makes all sorts of trouble. If we offer advice to another unasked, does it not, more often than

not, arouse antagonism? This is because of that other's innate sense of his own freedom, his own right to do as he pleases. He feels himself imposed upon, and the advice, maybe, is rejected, not because of the nature of the advice itself, but because of the antagonism which has been aroused by unwarranted interference. The good that we offer to one who is not consciously wanting it nor asking for it, is refused ninety-nine times out of a hundred.

So it is in the question of religion; the way to meet people and bring them to our way of thinking is not by forcing upon them that which they do not feel they need and do not ask for; but by living the truth ourselves — by letting our own light shine — until they recognize it and seek for themselves. When they ask for it themselves, then they are ready, their minds are open to a just consideration and consequent acceptance of it. How frequently we see people driven away from the truth by the persistent thrusting of it upon them by well-meaning persons.

On the other hand, there are those who, believing in the truth, and practising it so far as they are able, live year after year with those who are in opposition, until finally the latter, because of this quiet example, come to accept and to believe in it. It is the living the truth in the daily life rather than any objectionable forcing of it upon others that convinces. So it is well for us to remember that it is our own attitude only that is to be changed. Jesus nowhere tells us to make others different, — the work is always to be done with ourselves.

Therefore do not forget the fundamental principle of absolute freedom. You should no more thrust things on others than God thrusts things on you. He knows what we have need of and yet waits for us to ask. Each one should always have a chance to decide for himself in the exercise of his own freedom. Each should have the right to govern himself. We should try to see things from another's point of view, and then be careful not to violate the right of freedom in others as we would

wish them not to violate it in us. The freedom of the individual to do what he sees is right is an unchangeable principle that has no exceptions. Conformity to this will always bring the best results.

Every one has the right to entire freedom of thought and action, which means that the right of each person ends when it encounters that same right in another. Also it is well for us to remember that to leave others in *their* freedom is the only way by which we can maintain our own. If you go beyond that and attain your object by personal influence or domination, you immediately put yourself in the place where you have directly or indirectly assumed a responsibility and therefore you are not yourself free. The jailer and the one locked up in jail are both in bondage, for the jailer is compelled to stay and take care of the prisoner because he has locked him up.

To allow others the same freedom we claim for ourselves does not mean that we are to sit supinely by, doing nothing to help bring about

better conditions. Instead, we should encourage the right wherever we see it, by voice, by influence, and by example, always remembering that the world is changed by change of understanding and not by legislation. No virtue was ever created by legislation or by the exercise of official authority. Public opinion moves forward and the lawmakers follow. Each one is responsible for his own share in that public opinion. If his thoughts and his life are right, his influence will always be in the right direction. Right thinking and right doing always bring right results. The little leaveneth the whole lump, and no one can measure the extent of his own influence.

Because the principle thus discussed is true, the asking stands as a necessity. That is, — *man must want before God gives.* What constitutes this asking? Merely, that we recognize the need, that we have the desire. It is simply the recognition in the heart of the need. The earnest wish of the heart going out to our Father is the essential of prayer. There is no neces-

sity for putting it into words; but if we recognize in connection with that need the source from which we expect help, that recognition is itself a prayer. If we then also recognize the fact that God has already given us all things, then is the prayer immediately answered. It is our failure to recognize this fact which makes us think the prayer is unanswered.

The gift of God is our existence, — the eternal life which He has given us from the beginning. With it He gives us all things, but He does not thrust them upon us nor compel us to take them. Paul says, "All things are yours";[1] and they are at hand to be taken when we recognize our need of them. All things are indeed ours, and the God of life, and of truth, and of righteousness is everywhere present ready to bestow on us every thing that we desire, if we will but put out our hands and take, if we will but recognize and know. Thus everything was provided "in the beginning," every possible request that man can present is already granted,

[1] 1 Cor. III. 21, 22.

and the whole question of answer to prayer is solved.

Therefore it rests with man to ask or not as he chooses, but the asking is essential to receiving. Not only is man free, but he is the ruler of the very earth itself and all that is upon the earth. He is the Son of the Highest, a king in his own right. It is this man that Jesus has in mind when he says, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him."

XI

THE METHOD OF JESUS

So far as indicated by the records that we have, the method by which Jesus accomplished his wonderful works, including the healing of diseases, was in exact compliance with his rules for praying and with the Great Rule which he gave to the little group of his disciples, — for their own use and for the use of the whole world, — on that morning when he answered Peter's question about the fig-tree. Though there may seem to be a wide diversity in his way of accomplishing his objects because of the great variety of attendant circumstances under which he acted, yet the essential method which underlies all his works is the same as that outlined in the directions regarding the removal of the mountain. It is a curious fact that no two of his precepts are just alike, and yet each is such a part of an immense, all-inclusive, and

harmonious whole that if a man obeys one of his precepts in its wonderful fullness and completeness of meaning, he will comply with them all.

The attitude of Jesus in relation to the healing of diseases or ailments of any kind is exactly the same as his attitude toward the removal of the mountain. Simplicity and directness are striking characteristics of his method. Indeed we might almost say there is no method. If one wishes to have a mountain removed, no elaborate process is necessary. Just tell it to be removed, believing that the Father will do it. It is so in the instances of healing. In each case Jesus takes the man at his word, in accordance with the measure of faith the man manifests. When the leper appealed to him, saying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," no attempt was made by the Master to influence him in any way except in the one suggested and included in the leper's request. Jesus confined himself strictly within those limits, and all conclusions or opinions

about the healing or by what means it was accomplished were disregarded. Afflicted as the leper was by a most loathsome and contagious disease, yet Jesus put out his hand and touched him and simply said, "I will; be thou clean."[1] The result was instantaneous. It reminds us of another time, when he spoke to the storm on Galilee saying, "Peace, be still," and instantly the waters were quiet.[2]

So also with the man born blind, whose eyes Jesus anointed with clay. He was told to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. He went, washed, and returned seeing. Then follows a lengthy account of an investigation with regard to the healing, but there is no word of any attempt, by occult means or otherwise, to influence the opinion of him who was healed, except by the simple question, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"[3] In the healing of the centurion's absent servant Jesus at first started to go to him; but, perceiving

[1] Matt. VIII. 2–4. [2] Mark IV. 36–41.
[3] John IX. 1–41; especially verses 35–38.

that the centurion's faith made this unnecessary, he merely said to the centurion, "Go thy way; and *as thou hast believed*, so be it done unto thee."[1] His servant was healed "in the selfsame hour." In the case of Simon's wife's mother, Jesus stood over her and rebuked the fever and it left her.[2] The meaning of "rebuked" appears in the incident of the man with an unclean spirit, which Jesus cast out. The account says he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying, "Hold thy peace, and come out of him."[3]

The simple command is a striking characteristic of his method. In all these instances[4]

[1] Matt. VIII. 5–13. [2] Luke IV. 38, 39.

[3] Mark I. 21–27; Luke IV. 33–36.

[4] Other instances of the method of Jesus in healing are as follows:

The nobleman's son. John IV. 46–54.
The man sick of the palsy. Matt. IX. 2–8.
The man with the withered hand. Matt. XII. 13.
The woman with the issue of blood. Matt. IX. 20–22.
The two blind men. Matt. IX. 27–30.
The deaf man. Mark VII. 31–35.
The raising of Lazarus. John XI. 41–44.
The blind men at Jericho. Matt. XX. 34.

it is to be noted that Jesus directly addresses the person or the object concerned. He does not confine himself to addressing human beings, he speaks in like terms to the fever, to evil spirits, to what is called inanimate nature, and he tells his disciples to speak in the same way to the mountain and to the tree.[1] This is as though there were life and intelligence in these material things. And this is exactly paralleled in the Genesis account of creation, where God is represented as addressing the different objects He had created — the waters, the land, and the animals — in a manner apparently the same as that in which He speaks to man. This is consistent with the fact that all created things, both animate and what we call inani-

The demoniac in the synagogue. Luke IV. 33–36.
The man at the pool of Bethesda. John V. 2–9.
The widow's son. Luke VII. 14, 15.
Jairus' daughter. Matt. IX. 23–26.
The daughter of the Syrophœnician woman. Matt. XV. 21–28.
The ten lepers. Luke XVII. 11–14.
The infirm woman. Luke XIII. 11–13.
Bartimæus. Mark X. 46–52.

[1] Mark XI. 23; Luke XVII. 6.

mate, are made of the substance of God which is life. John confirms this in his statement, "That which hath been made was life in Him; and the life was the light of men." [1]

The God-created man is a king in his own right, made so by the power of his Creator. Not only is man *free*, but he is the ruler of the earth and all that is upon the earth; and in the true life there is for man no servitude whatever. The Bible itself records this delegation of authority in the story of man's creation, where it says that man was given absolute dominion over all the earth and over all created things upon the earth, and was told to subdue even the very earth itself and make it do his bidding.[2] Thus to exercise this dominion and authority is a part of man's rightful privilege and is also his duty, because he is a son of God.

To my mind the man Jesus was a definite representation of the spiritual being, son of man and son of God, whose creation is described

[1] John I. 3, 4. Revised Version Margin.
[2] Gen. I. 26–28; Psalms VIII. 5–8.

in the first chapter of Genesis. There was no more of the earth man about him than was necessary to enable him to communicate with us, and yet he was distinctly human. The way he did his work is seen in that wonderful story of the creation where, — "God *said*, and *it was so.*" God said, "Let there be light; and there was light." This was God's faith, and such was the faith of Jesus when he said, "Be thou clean," and the leper was cleansed. He said, "Go and sin no more," and purity was revealed. He said, "According to thy faith be it unto thee," and it was so. In each case, "*He said*, and *it was so.*" This was the method of Jesus. He thus demonstrated his recognition of his divine sonship and his recognition of the power of the divine man as set forth in that first chapter of Genesis.

The removal of the mountain is only one incident in this subjugation of the earth which God told man to exercise. Obedience to these precepts of Jesus would restore man to his original power; and the basis of this restoration

is the single condition of having God's faith. This direction to subdue the earth is true in both a literal and a metaphorical sense; and so is the declaration of Jesus in regard to the faith of God. When we have the faith of God, when we *know* that we have God's faith, then shall we realize that we can do God's very work; and that is what His children are to do. In all the records that we have concerning Jesus, he manifests in its perfection that faith which he would have every man exercise continually. Jesus told us that every one could do the things that he did, thus encouraging us to resume our duty toward the earth and our proper relations to it. He, himself, as occasion required, commanded the elements and they obeyed him. It was on this basis exactly that he walked on the water and ordered the winds to stop blowing and the waves to stop their boisterous motion. And also it was on this basis that the loaves and fishes were multiplied.[1]

[1] Jesus exercised this authority over materiality on at least six occasions, when what we call insensate materiality obeyed his

These acts and declarations of Jesus, though they are entirely consistent with each other, are yet so wonderful and so far beyond the usual or ordinary affairs of life, that the world stands confused and bewildered by them. Men have looked at the materialistic and erroneous side of things so long, have believed in sense perceptions so implicitly, and have really known and understood so little about the powers and possibilities of man's spiritual and divine nature, that such statements and events as those attributed to Jesus seem to them impossible and therefore unbelievable. Forgetting the Godlike attributes in themselves, they have attempted to controvert Jesus' statement of transcendent truth regarding the

commands. First, when he changed the water into wine at the marriage feast; *John II. 1–11;* second, when he stilled the tempest; *Matt. VIII. 23–27; Mark IV. 36–41; Luke VIII. 22–25;* third, when he multiplied the loaves and fishes at the feeding of the five thousand; *Matt. XIV. 15–21; Mark VI. 35–44; Luke IX. 12–17; John VI. 1–14;* fourth, when he walked on the water; *Matt. XIV. 22–27; Mark VI. 45–51; John VI. 15–21;* fifth, when he fed the four thousand; *Matt. XV. 29–38; Mark VIII. 1–9;* sixth, when the fig-tree withered; *Matt. XXI. 17–20; Mark XI. 12–21.*

removal of the mountain and to shape it into a merely metaphorical presentation of the mountainous difficulties, troubles, and trials of the earthly life. Reasoning on this assumption they say that Jesus did not mean literally the mountain that was visible from where he stood, but that he used the word "mountain" only to represent any great perplexity, difficulty, or hardship, and that with belief in God and with His help these may be overcome. This minimized view is entirely correct as far as it goes; but such an interpretation stops far short of the full meaning of his words. To confine ourselves to these limited ideas is to abandon the practical but grand, ennobling, power-giving, and life-giving portion of the proposition as Jesus presented it.

Because these events are so wonderful, many refuse to believe they occurred, asserting that they would have been in direct violation of the unvarying laws of the universe; or they attempt to explain them by saying that they were miracles and that for the moment Jesus defied

and violated those laws, thus charging Jesus himself with doing exactly what he told others not to do. Such persons, in their own wisdom, assume that they understand all the laws of nature. They forget that comparatively few years have elapsed since the wisest would have declared impossible, and in direct violation of law, many events so common to-day that they have ceased to excite comment, being understood even by schoolboys. To-day no thoughtful man would assert that any event is in violation of law unless he is ready to say that he is entirely familiar with all the aspects of the particular law involved. One who did not know the fact might as well declare that iron will not float on water except in violation of natural law, yet under certain conditions, a lady's sewing-needle and an iron ship, the latter weighing thousands of tons and weighted down with a cargo of thousands more, alike float securely.

When separated from spirit or mind, the human body is an inert mass of materiality,

wholly unable to move unless acted upon by some power outside itself, yet we do not wonder when one's body moves in exact compliance with the direction of the mind.[1] This indicates a connection between a man's mind and his body; no man knows what that connection is, and no one can explain it, yet all believe it exists because all have experienced it in themselves.

You move your hand without the shadow of a doubt of your ability to do so. In fact, scarcely any one has any doubt that he can move his hand, or even his whole body, and he moves them according to his wishes; but, as has been experienced in numerous instances, the man who doubts his ability or disbelieves in it finds that his power to move his body is limited in exact proportion to his doubt or disbelief; yet in the presence of some sudden and overwhelming event, he experiences a change of thought and thereafter he moves himself as he chooses. Under the emergency his

[1] *A Search after Ultimate Truth*, Appendix H.

former belief is restored. Many well authenticated cases of this sort are recorded. This is illustrated by known instances of people who for years had been bedridden and helpless, getting up and walking in the presence of fire or some other great calamity.

This is in exact accord with the instructions of Jesus, who tells us that the mountain will be moved in response to our word if we do not doubt in the heart. Both the removal of the mountain and the moving of the body are accomplished or prevented by our own belief or lack of belief, and both are governed by the same universal law. Jesus would have us place ourselves in the same mental condition with regard to the mountain that we now hold toward our hand or our body, that is, without a doubt in our hearts as to our ability to move it.

The mountain or any other material object is no more inert than is the body when disconnected from mind; nor can any one prove that there is not also a natural connection between the man and the mountain whereby

the mountain must obey the man's behest as his body does. It is simply assumed that the removal of a mountain by the command of a man is impossible because man has never seen it done. The assertion that there is no connection between the two is a pure assumption, based on general belief and on the fact that man does not perceive any such connection. Neither does any one perceive the connection between the mind of a man and his body, but we believe in its existence solely because we have seen the body move at man's command. It is a matter of constant experience; to remove a mountain has yet to become an experience, but in the presence of the positive and unqualified assertion of Jesus, who shall say that it is beyond the range of possibility?

Since we accept as a fact that there is a relationship of some kind between a man's mind and his body, is it wholly unreasonable to suppose that there is a similar, though not yet recognized, relationship between the mind

of man and other material objects as well as his body? The wonder that we move our bodies has largely disappeared because we have so long been familiar with the phenomenon; so has our wonder at the growth of the grass and the trees, and at the coloring of the leaves and the flowers. Life is always moving matter in countless ways and places, disposing of it as it pleases — one atom in the blush of the rose, another in the green of the leaf, and another in the trunk of the tree. Why may not life move materiality as it pleases, in other ways and other places, and in the mass as well as in atoms?

Luke gives an instance of Jesus' teaching on this subject. The disciples had appealed to Jesus to increase their faith, and he said to them, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you."[1] This is more concise than his answer

[1] Luke XVII. 5, 6.

to Peter's question about the fig-tree, but it is quite as positive and is identical in character. The essential requirement in both cases is faith: in one case the result of the exercise of faith will be the removal of a mountain; in the other the removal of a tree. In both the means by which the desired object is to be accomplished is a command. In both the result is stated with equal positiveness: in one — "He shall have it," or "He shall have whatsoever he saith"; and in the other — "It shall obey you."

On the occasion of healing a lunatic boy,[1] Jesus used a similar expression regarding faith. His disciples had attempted to heal the boy and had failed, but Jesus healed him; then they asked him why they had failed, and he answered, "Because of your unbelief; for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and *nothing shall be im-*

[1] Matt. XVII. 14–21.

possible unto you." The declaration of Jesus to the boy's father includes the whole principle: "All things are possible to him that believeth";[1] and this is the equivalent of the words he used in addressing his disciples on this same occasion, "Nothing shall be impossible unto you."

Whatever the circumstances, faith — which is like unto God's faith — is superior to every condition; and so closely does Jesus adhere to this principle that in his directions to his disciples he never deigns to mention the attendant and seemingly untoward circumstances. The directions regarding faith and its exercise are all that is necessary. What need is there of mentioning hindrances which do not stand before it, any more than straws in the gale?

It is no wonder, then, that the winds and the sea, even the mountains and all earthly things, obey him, because through faith, Jesus — and every one who believes without a doubt in his heart — is their master. Faith is supreme

[1] Mark IX. 23, 24.

over every other power; and therein is the reason why he told his disciples to have God's faith. With it nothing is impossible; without it, we are powerless; but supreme faith, the faith of God, is possible to His child.

In whatever light we may view the works of Jesus, the record of the Gospels fully sustains the conclusion that they were all done in exact compliance with the explicit rules which he laid down for the guidance of men, whereby they were to do the works that he himself did, and even greater than he had done, as he himself declared. There is but one essential condition, and that condition is the possession of faith.

XII

EXAMPLES OF JESUS' METHOD

THE human mind accepts great truths slowly. In some respects at least, the first chapter of Genesis is as remarkable as any in the Bible. It is a peculiar fact that, for some reason or other, this chapter was accorded very little recognition among the sacred writers of the Bible, and was given no particular attention, even if at all referred to, until the time of Jesus. We are in doubt about many things and about nothing more than the general subject of origins. That question is among the very first which attract the human mind. Where did I come from? Where did you come from? Where did the world come from? We are all familiar with a multitude of such questions. We are told to go to the Bible, but we do not recognize in it any definite statement with regard to our own origin. Yet it is there.

God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." The persistent peculiarity of the human mind to inquire into the little things which are of small consideration and neglect the great ones which lie plainly before it, is manifest in connection with that statement. The question is immediately asked, "With whom was God talking? And who is meant by 'us'?"

These lesser thoughts hide the other and greater thoughts. Thus by such questions we disregard the information concerning our origin and fundamental characteristics. What does this peculiarity mean? It was the same with the disciples. It was so with the story of the Hebrew children and the prophets, and it has been so ever since. When the question is of big things, for some reason or other we turn to a thing of no particular importance, a little thing, and ask about it, forgetting the greater. The cent close to the eye hides from the beholder the sun which lights the whole solar system!

God said, "Let us make man in our image." There is the origin. Then follows the answer to the question, "What are we here for?" "Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth." How many remember that "dominion over all the earth" is included in this statement?

"So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

The account begins with the declaration of the creation of man, and the object — man's dominion over all the earth. He is given dominion over every thing upon the earth *except* his brother man. We find it to be an historical fact that man in his attempt to have dominion over his brother has lost dominion

over himself and over all the things of the earth as well as over the earth itself.

If there is one of these statements which people doubt more than another, it is that of dominion over the earth. We can more easily, perhaps, accept the other statements, but dominion over the earth is an idea harder for us to comprehend and so we allow the earth to dominate us. Even our most noted scientific men declare that we are largely, if not wholly, subject to our environment. However, in the following story, each of the three writers, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, tells of a wonderful instance of dominion over the very earth, wherein it was subject to the command of man.

"Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples; and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. But as they sailed he fell asleep; and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish."[1]

[1] Luke VIII. 22–24.

They were old sailors, familiar with the lake, knowing its character, brought up on its shores, had practised fishing there all their lives, yet here was a storm that terrified them. They turned to Jesus. All hope was gone; death was all about them. "Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water; and they ceased, and there was a calm."

He did this presumably on the basis of the oft-repeated statement that he was Jesus the Christ, the Son of God. On that assumption is it presumable that he did anything that was in violation of God's ordinances? Rather is it not probable that he was the one man among all men who really understood the laws of God and so did what man was intended by his Creator to do? We grow very slowly out of old ideas. We look upon miracles as something beyond the natural course of events. We look upon them as the suspension of law, the suspension of principle, something that overrides law and sets it aside; and here was a miracle! Now, if we take literally the state-

ment in the first chapter of Genesis, there is no miracle in this event. Jesus was simply doing what God intended man should do; namely, subdue the earth, and have dominion over it.

After they had reached the other shore, they came to the "country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee. And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and wore no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs." [1]

A man possessed of devils! Such were not uncommon in those days. Indeed, this disorder can be traced back to earliest times and is found to have been prevalent among most primitive peoples. It is also prevalent in our own time and more so than we who have not looked into the subject are at first disposed to believe. There are many people to-day who, one might say, are possessed of spirits, or obsessed by some fixed idea. The belief in

[1] Luke VIII. 26, 27.

witchcraft is not by any means extinct, only now we give it another name.

The belief in the possession by evil spirits has continued from earliest times until our own, and it seems to have been very common in the time of Jesus. The Gospels have many references to it, though it is hardly mentioned in the book of John, which is curious when we remember its prevalence among the people. The malady has many degrees. Some cases culminate in what we call insanity, others take a milder form, and of yet other cases we merely say that the man rides a hobby, or we say that he gets cranky or something of that sort. All forms of the disorder have a similar beginning; a person gets an idea into his head and he allows it to develop and fasten itself there, so that it becomes fixed in his mind, until finally it controls him entirely or, as we say, "it runs away with him."

All of us are more or less in this condition; that is, every one of us is ruled by some dominant idea, each has some dominant belief, opin-

ion, or thought in his mind. Whatever it may be, it masters the person it possesses, and he acts in accordance with that idea. The old saying attributed to Solomon is to this day literally true, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

Sometimes it is extremely difficult to dispossess ourselves of these ideas when they are erroneous. The trouble is that we *think* they are true, and so for that reason it is more difficult to dislodge them. Naturally we look upon the person so possessed according to our own opinion regarding the idea. If we think it is erroneous we condemn him; if we think it is good we praise him.

In relation to the question of evil Jesus laid down a rule for us to follow, and if we comply with this rule evil will totally disappear. If we follow his precepts and do as he told us to do, the appearances of evil will absolutely vanish as the devils did at the word of Jesus. It is a question of self-control with each individual. We have the divine right to control

ourselves by controlling our thoughts, and every one can do this successfully if he excludes the erroneous thought as soon as he recognizes it.

We are all aware of the power of mental suggestion. Each of us knows of cases of insanity induced by mental habits. It is not difficult to realize how, from the suggestions of those about them and from their own thinking, weak minds have become possessed with the insane idea that devils had control of them, and, once possessed, they have acted accordingly.

So with this man of the Gadarenes. The story is told in accordance with the prevailing opinion of the country. "A certain man, which had devils long time, and wore no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not." [1] The language was entirely natural to a man in

[1] Luke VIII. 27, 28.

this condition, for Jesus had commanded the evil spirit to come out of him. It is noticeable that when he healed Simon's wife's mother, he used substantially the same language as he used on this and on other occasions.[1] He commanded the unclean spirits and they obeyed.

"And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion:[2] because many devils were entered into him. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep." This man possessed of the idea of devils, besought Jesus that he would not command them to go out into the abyss.[3]

"And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain; and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them." That is, he

[1] Matt. XVII. 18; Mark I. 25; Luke IV. 38–41.

[2] The Roman legion sometimes consisted of as many as six thousand men.

[3] The Greek word translated "abyss" means — "bottomless pit," or "annihilation."

neither refused nor ordered. "Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine." [1]

The dominion which Jesus possessed over the erroneous idea, the erroneous thought, like the well-known power which he possessed over all forms of sickness, expelled the devils out of the man, expelled the wrong idea. Herein is the recognition of the broad law of dominion by man which is laid down in the first chapter of Genesis. And that dominion is not limited to the one man Jesus; it is for every man to exercise, because this power is inherent in the nature of man if we accept the statement as given in Genesis; for we read there that God gave man the ability to do these things. As we have said before, nowhere does Jesus claim anything exclusively for himself. He says, "The works that I do shall ye do also"; but more than that, he recognizes that he is the Son of God and that we also are God's children, for he tells us to say, "Our Father who art

[1] Luke VIII. 30–33.

in heaven." If that is a pinnacle, he places us there beside himself.

According to the declaration in the first chapter of Genesis, man has power over the animals to control them, and over all materiality. Therefore, in the case of this possessed man, Jesus was but exercising his God-given authority. At the word of Jesus, "The devils went out of the man, and entered into the swine," which acted as if they too were possessed, for the story says, "The herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked."

The belief in being possessed by the devil or evil is one type of error. The idea of the Jews, like the general idea of to-day, was that we must resist evil, must fight it, must contend with it or control it. But Jesus said, "Resist not evil," therefore he did not resist this evil, did not resist these devils, did not undertake to control them, any more than he undertook to control any person, whether possessed or not. He left every one free always, and in

this instance he did not resist the evil; he left it free and it destroyed itself.

When the news spread abroad throughout the city and country, and the people learned of the wonderful thing that Jesus had done, they came to him and "found the man sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind." Then they "besought him to depart from them, for they were taken with great fear." Jesus left them and did not involve himself or them in any contention; he left them to their own ways and their own thoughts. But later, when Jesus returned to the country of the Gadarenes, the people received him gladly. He did not resist the people when they did not want him, but went peacefully away; but afterward they were glad of his return and were ready to listen to him. He did not combat the wrong ideas, but left them alone and they destroyed themselves. Neither the evil man nor the evil thought is to be resisted; the evil is to be left to itself. Then it disappears.

This is the lesson as I see it: If we leave evil free, it will destroy itself. Not that we are to comply with it, but we should seek to know what our ideals are, and to know whether they are right or wrong; and, having done that, we should exorcise the evil spirits. We may exorcise or cast the evil out of ourselves and then, left alone, it destroys itself. We keep it alive by opposing it. We keep it alive by contending with it. We keep it alive by fighting it. Jesus would have us put it out of ourselves and then leave it alone. That is the end of evil.

XIII

THE NEED OF FORGIVING

"AND behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven."[1] This story of the healing of the paralytic shows the true meaning of the word "forgive." The word is one that Jesus frequently used. It is sometimes translated "send away, put out, let go"; several times it is translated "send away" in places where it could mean nothing else.[2]

The Greek word here rendered "sin" is more inclusive in its meaning than the English word

[1] Matt. IX. 2–8; Mark II. 1–13; Luke V. 17–26. Revised Version.

[2] Compare Mark XI. 25, which may be interpreted as follows: And whenever you are praying, if you hold anything against any one, *send* it *away*, in order that your Father which is in heaven may also *send away* your own false steps.

"sin" in the usually accepted signification. The Greek word means "A failure to hit the mark." Thus it includes not only sins, or those errors to which man attaches a moral quality, but also mistakes of every kind whatsoever. Hence, this man had not necessarily been a sinner, as the word is ordinarily understood, but he had committed errors of some kind. Thus the passage might read, "Son, be of good cheer; thy failures are forgiven," or "thy faults have been sent away."

It is evident from the course of the story that those sitting by were looking for the man to be healed; but they did not expect such expressions from the Master's lips, and they found fault with him because he declared forgiveness, which they thought to be a thing distinct from healing. This man, Jesus, who was beyond their comprehension, might heal the man of his infirmity; God alone could forgive sin. Jesus turns from the sick man and addresses himself directly to the fault-finders, saying to them, "Whether is easier, to say, Thy

sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise and walk?" One is as easy to say as the other. The suggestion is that one form of expression is the equivalent of the other. He continues his remark to them, "But that ye may know that the Son of man [1] hath power on earth to forgive sins," and then, turning from them and addressing himself specially to the paralytic, he says, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitudes saw it, they marveled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men." This showed to the people that the same thought underlies both healing and forgiving. If this story is true and if these expressions are correctly reported, then healing and forgiving are essentially one and the same.

This, then, becomes a definition of forgiveness. The man wished to be restored to the

[1] The term "Son of man," is a favorite title with Jesus. I believe in its largest interpretation, that is, the divine being in each and every one, the divine being in you and in me.

condition he would have been in if he had never committed the error from the consequences of which he was suffering. Restoration to health would do this; and to be so restored would constitute at once his own healing and the forgiveness of the error. We ask for the same kind of restoration whenever we ask for forgiveness, whether we can state our desire in words or not. We wish to get into the place or condition we should have been in had we never done the thing for which we ask forgiveness. When we really forgive, we place the forgiven one in the relation to us that he would have occupied if the offence had never been committed. This is the meaning of forgiveness. This is the only real and true forgiveness. If we put this interpretation into the words wherever Jesus speaks of forgiveness, we shall find them luminous with the light of truth.

Thus is accomplished the entire destruction of the not-good and the returning of it to its own nothingness. This is the only true demon-

stration over it. With this there is the perfect healing. Then indeed is the evil tree hewn down, and cast into the fire, and utterly destroyed, as wood that is burned up.

We ourselves have lived in the old Jewish thought that God alone can forgive sins. This was the exact expression in the question of the Pharisees. But the reply of Jesus shows us that the *Son of man hath* power on earth to forgive all faults. There is nothing equivocal in this declaration, as the subsequent events prove.

Who is this Son of man who has the power to forgive sins and all mistakes? The almost universal reply which Christians would give to this question is, — Jesus the Christ. Jesus has the power to forgive sins. But we are to remember that Jesus does not claim for himself anything that he does not believe possible to all God's children. The culmination of his declarations of this sort is the one we like to quote so well: "The things that I do shall ye do also; and greater things than these shall ye do."

Jesus had the power to heal, to forgive sin and all wrong, and we, he says, are to do the things that he did. This makes it clear that we also have the power to do these things. Then it behooves us to forgive our brother for every wrong he has committed against us, whatever it may appear to be.

The doctrine of forgiveness is one to which Jesus attaches great importance. He teaches that we have the power to forgive and that we should forgive even as we expect to be forgiven. He taught us in that great prayer of his to say, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," and we certainly do recognize that we have the power to forgive our debtors if we choose.

Then if you can forgive, if you can send away the wrong thought, if you can put out of mind the injury done you and forgive the one who has injured you, if you can do a good deed to save some one from suffering, will not the infinite, divine Being, the very Author of your existence, who is more than father or mother

or both, will He not guide you in the way that you should go, will He not show you the right and the true and the good? When we ask for help, He will surely give it. This, I believe, is the relation between us and our loving Father.

XIV

PRAYER AND HEALING

We now come to a consideration of the practical application of the principles which we have been investigating. Some one has well said that the only reason for the existence of any science or philosophy is its advantage to the life of man. Our theme touches life in its deepest recesses, for it is both the science and the philosophy of life; therefore its application touches all life's action. Its rules are the rules for right living.

Thus far, in our investigation of the subject of prayer, little has been said about the special subject of bodily healing. Such healing is not the essential object, unless we hold, as indeed we should, to the larger idea of universal healing — the curing of all ills, the correction of all error. The ultimate object is nothing short of that. As an incident in that larger

object the bodily healing is of great importance. The old idea, a sound mind in a sound body, is by no means to be flouted, and in the progress of humanity this has long been recognized. With Jesus, healing was a subject of fundamental importance. Men have decidedly misunderstood his attitude and have failed to realize how important Jesus regarded this subject of healing.

In all ages of the world man has desired to be rid of his imperfections and diseases. When Jesus told his listeners, and through them all mankind, how they could be perfect even as their Father in heaven,[1] he recognized this desire, pointed out the method by which it should be attained, and predicted its fulfillment. Probably freedom from pain and disease is more earnestly desired and more persistently sought than freedom from any other apparent imperfection, defect, or infirmity, even more than freedom from immorality or vice; and

[1] "Love your enemies. . . . Ye therefore shall be perfect." Matt. V. 43–48. Revised Version.

in the unqualified inclusiveness of this declaration Jesus proclaims the perfect healing of every disease and the removal of every imperfection as not only a possibility but a certainty. That he was mindful of this desire and of its intensity is shown by the amount of time he occupied in healing those who came to him for help; and it is specially to be noted that he did not reprove any one for this desire to be made well, nor did he turn any one away until completely restored to health. He taught his disciples to heal, and when he sent them forth, healing was an important part of their mission. It stands to-day as much our mission as the proclaiming of the kingdom of heaven.

Fortunately in his instructions regarding prayer Jesus has given us, in terms which admit of no misunderstanding, clear and unmistakable directions for the accomplishment of all healing. Prayer is the basis of all healing if we accept the meaning of prayer as logically deduced from what Jesus said and did. To understand, therefore, how to pray, is the first

essential to be mastered by one who would enter upon the work of healing. No man has ever been so successful in restoring people to health as Jesus, because no one has attained his knowledge of prayer.

Jesus appears to have used no other agencies for healing save those peculiar to himself. However, in a single instance, — that of anointing the blind man's eyes with clay, — a material means seems to have accompanied his usual method.[1] Though with him his method never failed, yet we have no record that he ever insisted upon it to the exclusion of other means. However, as time went on, healing by prayer was less and still less taught and practised, until by the end of the third century after his crucifixion, this form of healing the sick and afflicted had fallen into almost entire disuse. The use of physical or material remedies became again, as it had been before Jesus' time, almost the only instrumentality for healing the sick. The instructions of Jesus on this subject were

[1] John IX. 1–7.

almost entirely neglected, having been forgotten or else looked upon with disfavor and ridicule. Fortunately, all through the centuries there have been at least some who, under one name or another, have had glimpses of his manner of healing. They may not have recognized that it was his way and oftentimes they have mingled other ideas with it, but throughout the years the prayer of faith has healed many. In recent years mental methods have come into prominence. In view of the apparent conflict of opinion on this subject it will be well to make a careful examination of the words of Jesus applicable to healing.

Praying is foremost among the many things that Jesus taught, and it occupies a larger space in his teaching than any other subject. If we were to take out of his teaching what he said about prayer we should rob it of its heart. Prayer has popularly been regarded as only a form of asking, seeking, entreating, begging. While this might be said of some phases of prayer, there is little of it in his teaching.

With him prayer often rises into the most holy and ecstatic communion, entirely remote from the slightest appearance of supplication or beseeching. As set forth by Jesus prayer has its sure response, and the only question is that of becoming conscious of what has already been conferred.

All that Jesus said on this subject will be found wholly practical when understood, but there are certain things which cannot be explained and these are oftentimes the simplest and most fundamental. Thinking is the basis and cause of all human action,[1] but no one can tell another how to think, and though he can tell his friend to move, he cannot tell him how to make the slightest movement. Loving is one of the fundamental and essential acts of life and living, but what immense folly it would be to try to tell some one who had never loved how to love. Loving comes at last of itself in response to the yearning desire of the heart to love and to be loved, — comes perhaps in a

[1] See *Right and Wrong Thinking and Their Results.*

tumultuous torrent like the flooded mountain torrent, sweeping all minor obstacles along with it, or tossing them ruthlessly from its path, — or it comes perhaps in silent, steady movement like that of the earth in its orbit, and as ceaseless and irresistible. But who can tell another how? Even the lover, in the midst of his loving, would laugh at him who tried to tell him how.

It is so with prayer, and especially prayer that deals with the healing of human ills. No one can tell another how to pray or how to heal. Even Jesus the Christ, in his ineffable wisdom and understanding, did not fully tell us this. He has given us the fundamental rules for all prayer and all healing, but at the last analysis it is an individual work which each must accomplish for himself and in his own particular way. Jesus realized this, and though he said to us, "Pray thou," and he said, "Have faith," yet he knew that the "*how*" of faith and of prayer could not be conveyed from one mind to another, but must come from the heart of

each individual. He knew also that somehow, sometime, it *would* come to the one who is earnestly seeking to know the truth.

The rules for healing are set forth in the words of Jesus which we have been considering, beginning with "Ask, and it shall be given you," and ending with "Forgive, if ye have aught against any."[1] These rules are brief but complete and contain the very essence of the method of healing. We are first to have faith in the omnipotent divine Being, that Being who is always present everywhere and who is not only all-powerful but who is all-wisdom and all-truth and all-love. We are to have faith in eternal principle, truth and rightness; faith in God — God's faith. If we then withdraw from all else and realize that we are the individuals described in the story of the creation, as told in the first chapter of Genesis, then, when we enter into the secret place of the true self, those things that we ask for are ours. When this is said, practically

[1] Matt. VII. 7, 8; Mark XI. 22–25.

all is said. Herein is not only the secret of healing according to Jesus' method, but also the rule for avoidance of all error and for securing all truth and right. This is the teaching of Jesus the Christ, and this is the life of the true Christian.

So far as I have been able to examine and understand the method of any class of persons who practise mental healing, faith cure, spiritual healing, or divine healing — by whatever name they may designate it, or themselves, Christian Scientists, mental scientists, metaphysicians, etc. — the actual working method of all is the same; and, when reduced to fundamentals, the method of each will be found to be only varying expressions of the method of Jesus the Christ. Each class has its own peculiar theory and explanation. Each may start from a different point of view, but when they come to the actual method of healing, it is substantially the same with them all. This will not appear strange when we remember that principle really underlies all action; therefore

there must be one rule or one set of rules governing each particular class of activities. Jesus was the first to announce these rules, and, having been announced by him, accurately and completely, they must stand for all time and for all who do the work. Other rules, such as may be made in the multitudinous applications possible for a single universal principle, must be only variations of his rules. We shall understand this better as we grow wiser, and with our added wisdom we shall be able to take more accurate and comprehensive views of our own position and the position of others.

Therefore in the work of healing ourselves and others as well, we have only to understand and master the rules which Jesus gave. We must not forget, however, that his rules for every-day thinking and living are also included as tributary to the result and also as necessary. For instance, "When ye stand praying, *forgive*, if ye have aught against any." No one can hope otherwise to arrive at the perfection

which Jesus manifested and which he wished us to attain. Our failure to observe this is the reason why more efficient work is not done by us in these days.

Jesus never claimed for himself anything that he did not recognize as belonging equally to all men; he never claimed that he possessed any power that is not common to all men. While he ascribed the healing effects directly to God, he declared in language the most explicit, over and over again, that they were wrought by faith, by a law. The teaching of Jesus is scientific in the exact meaning of that word; that is, it is always in harmony with the laws of science. Wherever this has appeared not to be the case, it has been found that science was at fault.

There is no more wonderful instance of the faith of Jesus than that at the tomb of Lazarus when, *before* he spoke the words that brought Lazarus to life, he made this prayer of thanks to God: "Father, I thank Thee that Thou *hast* heard me. And I knew that Thou hearest

me always." [1] He frequently said, "*Thy faith* hath made thee whole," showing that he did not claim that it was he himself who accomplished the cure but that the person was healed through *his own* faith. So it was in the case of the woman who had been diseased for twelve years and who came to him and but touched the hem of his garment and was made whole from that hour. Jesus' words to her on that occasion were, "Daughter, be of good comfort; *thy faith* hath made thee whole." [2] And again, on that same day, "According to your faith be it unto you." [3] On another occasion he said, "If thou canst believe, *all things* are possible to him that believeth." [4]

"Believe that ye *have* received." This is the thought that bestows the power upon the individual. It is the source from which comes the virility of the occasion. It is that which makes the man a god and bestows upon him the

[1] John XI. 41, 42.
[2] Matt. IX. 20–22; Luke VIII 43–48.
[3] Matt. IX. 29. [4] Mark IX. 23.

ability really to perform the acts of a god. It was the source of Jesus' power which enabled him to say to the impotent man, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house," and to say to the leper, "I will; be thou clean." The time is coming when *all* healing will be accomplished instantaneously, but first we must think and live more nearly as Jesus directed.

In the case of the man whom the disciples failed to heal, Jesus did not inquire into the conditions of the disease, but upbraided his disciples for their lack of faith. They had been doing great things and yet he addressed them: "Ye of little faith." Faith is supreme. Without faith we can do nothing. Jesus laid down the law of faith when he said, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."[1]

As before stated, the work of healing bodily disease must be individual work, to be done by each in his own way, always following the rules

[1] Matt. XXI. 20–22; Mark XI. 20–26.

of Jesus. It is especially an individual work, and each should give his individuality full scope, with confidence applying the principles as he understands them. With practice will come fuller comprehension, and a clearer understanding.

I have tried in my two earlier books [1] to set forth the underlying principles of life and action. I wished to build a foundation for all action as well as for this work of healing, because it all rests upon the understanding and appreciation of these principles. You cannot be too fully imbued with them and they cannot be too familiar to you. With an understanding of the basic principles of life one can make an application of them to every problem that may arise, just as one makes application of the principles of arithmetic to the solution of arithmetical problems.

The consideration of these principles began with the study of the subject of harmonious

[1] *Right and Wrong Thinking and Their Results*, and *A Search after Ultimate Truth.*

and discordant thinking.[1] In the work of healing, the principles which were then examined, as well as those since considered, are to be applied in accord with the circumstances, as you perceive them; and first of all to your own self. The application of these principles in your own life will cause you, as far as in you lies, and always more and more, to exclude discordant thoughts from yourself until they are all excluded.

We well might follow the example of the great Hindu teachers who make it an invariable part of their lives to retire for at least half an hour daily into the silence, to relax their muscles and govern their breathing, and to meditate on eternal things.[2] They allow nothing to interfere with this time, which they set apart each day for this particular purpose. The benefits of such a practice are incalculable. How else can we recognize and realize these great, positive relations, these fundamental

[1] *Right and Wrong Thinking and Their Results.*
[2] *Talks to Teachers*, by William James, page 74.

and therefore essential principles? Each individual needs a little time each day when he "enters into the retired place" of himself, where "spirit with spirit can meet," and he can have that communion which is without words because beyond all words, — in the realm where, in the consciousness of the eternal truth, words disappear.

You can begin with the examination and contemplation of any one of the relationships which exist between you and the Father. Continue the thought until it possesses you. Let time and space and materiality disappear. Enter into the things of truth and let them enter into you in active contemplation, recognition, and consciousness; but for no other purpose than to become acquainted with them, to understand them as completely as you can, and actually to *be* those things as nearly as possible. This is nothing short of becoming acquainted with God, with the Infinite Father. Follow the advice of Eliphaz the Temanite: "Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at

peace; thereby good shall come unto thee."[1] This is prayer in its highest form. Communion with God like this will be to each individual an advantage immeasurable.

In this communion there should be the recognition of the true spiritual being whom God created in His own image and likeness, and who thus was created free from all error. Let the thought of what it means to be created "in *His* image and likeness" take absolute possession of you. Try to *know* what it really means. Let the realization of this truth flood your entire being. Thus will you be filled with this divine idea, this recognition and realization of the actual truth of being "in His image and likeness."

We are, in this communion, to realize the reality of this spiritual being. Here we "enter into the secret place of the Most High." Here we get beyond thought and thinking; we get beyond argument or reason; we get beyond the human and it disappears from sight; we

[1] Job XXII. 21.

exercise that in us which is divine, knowing what we have received, and realizing that knowledge — knowing and realizing the perfection which exists in every one of God's children. When we have thus entered into "the retired place," alone with God, there is and can be nothing else.

As we in this prayer allow all error to pass from our minds, thus will the truth emerge into sight just as the sunlight floods the landscape when the clouds are gone. The sunlight was there all the time but we did not see it, because *to us* it was hidden by the clouds; and so is the perfect health there, only to us it is obscured by the appearance of disease.

There is a beautiful Eastern story about a controversy between the sun and an angel. The angel told the sun about darkness; but the sun had never seen any darkness and did not know what it was; neither did the sun think there was any darkness, because light was everywhere that the sun had ever been. The angel, to sustain his statement, offered to con-

duct the sun to a place where there was darkness and show it to him. They went behind a mountain to find the shadow, but when the sun came with the angel there was no shadow there. They went to a great many places where the angel had before seen darkness, but when the sun came with him the darkness was not there. At last the angel took the sun into a deep cavern where he had once spent some time in complete darkness; but, to his astonishment, even there, there was no darkness.

We may apply this illustration to truth and error, reasoning thus: There can be no error where the truth is. God is all and He is truth. Thus in His presence there can be no evil, and He is everywhere present. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." There is no darkness in God's presence; His light is everywhere and His power is infinite. His power also is good and there is no other power, therefore all is harmony and perfection. "That which hath been made was life in Him." That

one thought is a mighty truth and includes every living thing in all the universe. If "that which hath been made was life in Him," then all the life there is, is His life, and in it there can be no defect, but perfection only.

Always when error disappears, truth is left; when materiality passes away, spirituality stands revealed. We all see sickness, disease, and death. These are the fleeting, transitory, unreal things. Health, perfect health, is the eternal, existent reality; it is the eternal truth of our being.

Even though we may give but a short time each day to such prayer and communion with God, and to the contemplation of the great truths of our being, yet it will transform our very appearance; it will put new power into our life, and new vitality into the lives of those about us. In this daily communion, however, we must avoid doubt and every discordant thought. Do not allow them place. Avoid also all selfish motives in this quest for infinite truth; indeed selfishness should be totally

wiped out. Do not say "I can't." "I can't" is of death. Your own thought is all that hinders. Close and "lock the door of thee" against these errors.

When beginning to acquire this wisdom and understanding of the truth, if doubts should arise, deal first with the positive truth which you do know, that truth which is to you a self-evident reality, and which admits of no possible uncertainty when you consider it, — God *is*, and God is *All*, and God is *Good*. These three statements are tremendous in their meaning and when rightly understood we shall see that they comprise the whole principle. On this principle depend the banishment of all error and the accomplishment of all healing. Study this, enlarge your understanding of it, and gradually every doubt will disappear.

Therefore do not be discouraged. Look at the truth and not at yourself. You are not working alone; you never can be working alone. God Himself is working with you, and you are working with Him. Have faith in

God, even if you do not feel that you have God's faith. Have confidence in yourself, in your divine reality, and in the sufficiency and willingness of God to grant you all things even to the uttermost. "Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." [1]

We should be as anxious to help others as ourselves in this work, whether they are asking for more knowledge of infinite truth, or for restoration to mental or physical health. Whatever it may be, — "Give to him that asketh thee," give freely of all that thou hast, and the blessing of giving shall return to you a hundredfold. Be not like the man in the parable who, knowing his master was exacting, and being afraid, hid his talent, but be like the one who, using what he had, received more. Because of a universal principle connected with our physical and mental, as well as with our spiritual being, he who continually avoids

[1] Joshua I. 9.

doing, finally loses the ability to do. The unused muscle atrophies; the unused brain becomes torpid; and the failure to make practical use of the understanding one has, clouds the spiritual perception.

In the work of healing there should be no exercise whatever of will power. There is no conscious effort whatever on your part, except towards the realization of the ultimate truth. That is all. Neither is there any exercise of dominion or domination over another; indeed, it is well to keep constantly in mind the thought of that other's perfect freedom. No will; no labor; no dominion; simply the knowing that the thing you ask for *is*. You only know through and through that your friend is well because God made him so. At the end of such work for another, you yourself are refreshed, because to you, too, has come — if you *really* have entered into the realization of the truth — baptism of the spirit. For, in its highest and purest form, that is what this healing is.

Go into the secret place whenever you are

asking for knowledge of the truth for yourself, or if you are asking assistance in giving help to another. Such prayer, which is indeed prayer in accordance with Jesus' instructions, will be answered. "The Father who is seeing in the secret place will give to thee in the clear light."

This wondrous truth will go through all your experience and be with you throughout unending life. It is as eternal as God Himself. It is a theme for the everlasting ages. You will never cease considering it. Even if you drop the study now, somewhere in the future you will take it up again and go on with it.

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